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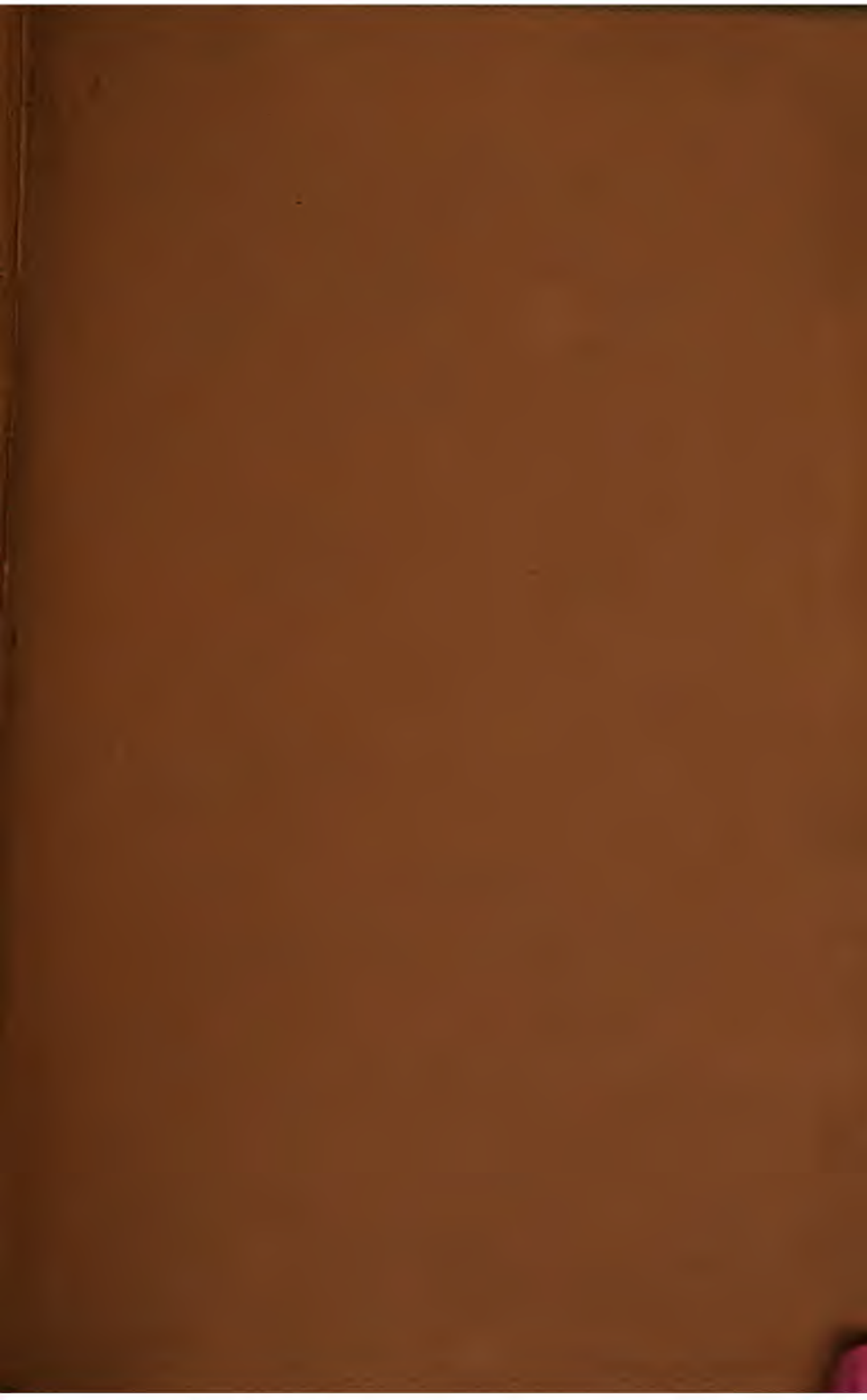


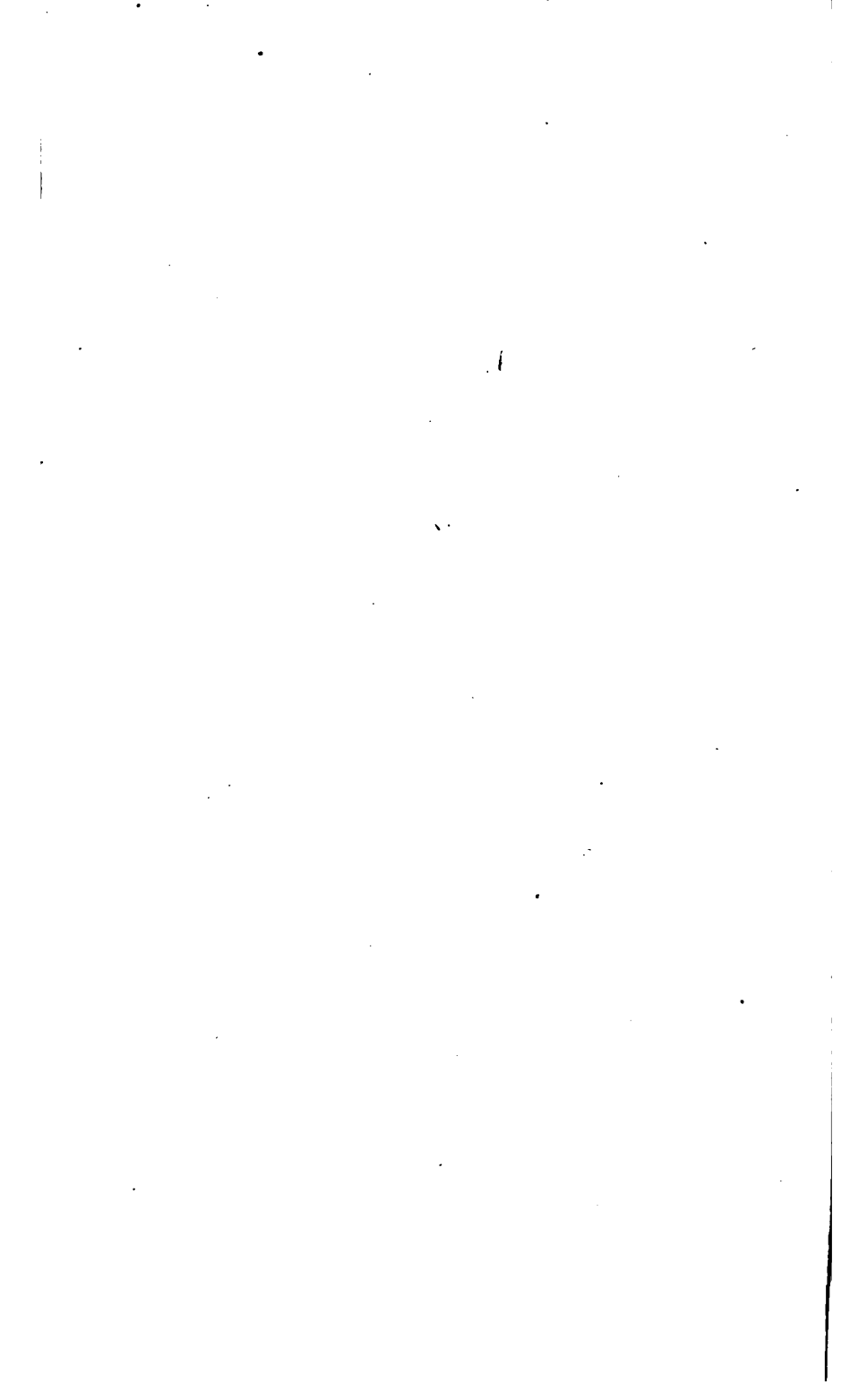
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~~J. H. Lloyd~~
~~Bull: Cell:~~

Mr. Montgomery?
from GCM.
Oct. 1917.



THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
SOPHOCLES;
LITERALLY TRANSLATED
INTO
ENGLISH PROSE,
FROM
THE GREEK TEXT OF BRUNCK:
WITH NOTES.

VOL. I.

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ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ŒDIPUS.

PRIEST.

CREON.

CHORUS.

TIRESIAS.

JOCASTA.

MESSENGER.

SERVANT.

SECOND MESSENGER.

ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS.

ŒDIPUS.

OH! my sons, youthful progeny of Cadmus of *old, why sit ye ^b here, decked out with suppliant boughs? The city is indeed at the same time full of incense, and at the same time both of pæans and of groans: which things, I, my sons, deeming it right not to hear from other messengers, have myself come hither; I, Œdipus, called glorious by all. But, aged man, tell me, since it is ^c becoming *thee* to speak before these, why stand ye here? Is it because ye have feared something, or through the wish to entreat something? As I should choose to minister my aid unto you by every

* Scil. γένεσθαι.

^b It is a usual mode of expression with the Greeks to have a cognate noun after its verb.

^c "Ἐφ' will be often found to require the rendering of ἔστι; the expression is here for πρίν σι).

means in my power; for dead to all pity should I be, did I not commiserate such an assembly.

PRIEST.

[I will not be silent on any account,] *but* I will speak. Thou seest us, Œdipus, sovereign of my country, of what age we are who are sitting by thy altars : some indeed [as half-fledged birds] not yet able to wing our flight afar, others indeed weighed down with years. I, indeed, the Priest of Jove, and other chosen youths; and another tribe adorned [with boughs] is sitting at the market, both by the two fanes of Minerva, and at the oracular shrine of Ismenus. For the city, as thou thyself seest, is already in an extreme state of fluctuation, and no longer able to raise her head from the depths of the blood-empurpled surge, pining away with the unripe ^efruits of the earth, and perishing with her pasturing herds, and with the abortive offspring of her wives. The fiery God, too, a most baleful pestilence having alighted upon her, agitates the city, by which the house of Cadmus is rendered desolate, and grim Hades is enriched with groans and lamentations. Neither do I, nor these children, sit suppliant here, judging thee equal to Gods, but *first* of *men*, both in the events of life, and in the interpositions of 'Hea-

^a Ἄλλῃ and γὰρ frequently occur where there is an ellipse to be supplied, generally very apparent.

^e Literally, with the husks containing fruit.

f By *συμφοραῖς βίον*, we are to understand the common events of life as contradistinguished from *εὐαγγελμαῖς*, which are thought to mean the extraordinary visitations of the Gods. *Brunch.*

ven ; thee,—who, having come to Cadmus' city, didst at least deliver us from the tribute of the harsh song, stress which we were wont to pay, and that, too, having known nothing more from us, nor gained any instruction from us ; but, by the aid of Heaven, thou art said and art thought to have raised up our state. And now, oh ! Œdipus, dearest unto all, we thy suppliants here with one accord beseech thee to invent some means of relief for us, whether having heard an oracle of any God, or whether thou knowest it any how from man : since I observe the counsels * contributed by the voice of experience most of all unerring. Come on, best of men, rear up our city ; come, take some measure of providential regard ; as this land now, indeed, salutes thee her preserver, by reason of thy former zeal : but let us by no means cherish in our minds the remembrance of thy reign as [characterized by the double event of our] having been made to stand erect during it, and afterwards having fallen to the ground : but raise up this city in security ; for thou didst then, with propitious omen, afford to us good fortune ; and be thyself at present : since if thou wilt rule this land as thou dost now, more honourable it is, to reign with people, then o'er a desolated waste ; as neither town nor ship is ought, when reft of man to dwell thereon.

ŒD. Oh ! my pitiable sons, ye have drawn nigh,

* Some have thought *συμφορὰς* to mean here, the events resulting from the counsels given ; but this seems to strip the word of the contingency which is implied in it. It will here bear its primitive sense of *collatio*.

desiring things known, and not strange to me; for I well know that ye are all diseased, and being so, that there is not one of you who is in equal degree afflicted with myself: for your pain reaches to your single selves alone and to no other; but my soul mourns both for the city, for myself, and at the same time for thee. So that ye arouse me not sunk in slumber; but know that oft times I have in truth shed tears, and roamed many ways in the wanderings of anxious care; but the only means of affording a remedy, which after due consideration I have found, this have I put in execution; for Creon, Menœceus' son, my ^h kinsman, I sent to the Pythian mansions of Phœbus, that by inquiry he might hear by what deeds or words I might relieve this city: and the present time, when calculated by that of his departure, gives me pain as to how he fares; for unreasonably he is absent more than the becoming time; but when he may have arrived, then base should I be in not executing whatsoever the God may point out.

PR. But opportunely hast thou spoken; these here at least just now inform me that Creon is approaching.

ŒD. Oh King Apollo! [I offer up my prayer to thee;] *for* would that he may have come with the fortune of a preserver in such degree as he is bright in visage.

PR. [We cannot be certain;] but as far indeed as we may conjecture, he is the messenger of good, for

^h Any relative by marriage is styled *γυμνός*.

otherwise he would not be approaching, having his head thus fully adorned with chaplets of fruitful laurel.

ŒD. Soon shall we know, for he is within the distance of hearing. Oh ! royal son of Menœceus, my kinsman, what report dost thou come bearing to us from the God ?

CREON.

CR. Good news ! for I say that even painful things, if they should chance to end aright, may all be happy.

ŒD. But what mean these words ? for neither am I emboldened, nor am I prematurely afraid by thy present tone.

CR. If thou art desirous to hear whilst these here are present, I am prepared to speak, or [if thou wishest it not in their presence] to step within.

ŒD. Speak out among all ; for more grief do I sustain in my concern for these, than for my own life.

CR. I will speak what I heard from the God. King Phœbus openly commanded us to drive a pollution from the country, as nurtured in this land, nor to foster an immedicable ill.

ŒD. What sort of expiation ? What kind of calamity is this ?

CR. By banishment, or again expiating the stain of

¹ This answer is intentionally enigmatical, darkly indicating that the welfare of the state must be the result of some dreadful catastrophe.

murder, by murder ; since blood is deluging this ¹city.

ŒD. [What means this?] For concerning what sort of man does he mention this circumstance ?

CR. Laius, oh ! king, was first ruler of this land, before thou directed the helm of this state.

ŒD. By hear-say I know it : for never to this moment have I seen him.

CR. Since this king is dead, he now straightway charges us, to exact vengeance from certain murderers.

ŒD. Where in the world are they ? Where shall the vestige of an ancient crime, difficult of conjecture, be discovered ?

CR. He said in this land : and that which is investigated, is capable of being detected ; but that which is neglected, entirely escapes detection.

ŒD. Whether at home, or in the fields, or in a foreign land, did Laius meet with this murder ?

CR. Departing from home, as he said, to consult the ¹God, he did no longer return home, in the state in which he ²went.

ŒD. Did neither any messenger nor fellow-traveller behold the deed, from whom a man having derived some information might make good use of such knowledge ?

CR. [No.] For they are dead ; save one, who, having fled through fear, has it not in his power of his own

¹ This is an instance of the accusative absolute.

² *Θαυρὸς* is the term used for this specific office.

³ *Ὁς ἀποστάλλει. Αποστέλλω*, in a middle sense, means, 'I send myself, or depart ; and the passive is often used for the middle..

knowledge to tell any thing that he saw, except one circumstance.

ŒD. What sort of thing is that? for one thing might be the clue to discover many, could we receive but a small glimpse of hope.

CR. He said that robbers, having encountered him, slew him, not with the strength of one, but with a multitude of hands.

ŒD. How then did a robber proceed to this pitch of audacity, unless he was in some degree tampered with by gold from this quarter?

CR. These things were suspected; but when Laius perished, there was no auxiliary amidst our ills.

ŒD. But what sort of immediate ill restrained you from sifting this to the bottom, your king "having thus fallen?

CR. The Sphinx, enigmatical songstress, obliged us to consider what was before us, having dismissed things wrapped in clouds of obscurity.

ŒD. But from their first cause will I again unveil these things. For worthily did Phœbus, and worthily did'st thou institute this care in behalf of the dead: so that justly shall ye see me also an ally avenging this land, and at the same time the God. For not in the cause of more distant friends, but I, for my own sake, will disperse this pollution. For whosoever was the wretch that murdered him, he perhaps, with the same [fiendlike] hand, may wish to punish me. In lending my aid, therefore, in his cause, I benefit myself. But with all speed, my sons, rise up from your seats, having

* *Tygarides*—an instance of the abstract for the concrete.

raised these suppliant boughs : but let another assemble here Cadmus' people, since I am about to do every thing [in the cause :] for prosperous or [forever] undone will we prove ourselves, under the auspices of the God.

PR. Let us arise, my sons ; because, for the sake of these things which this [our sire] announces, have we also come hither : and may Phœbus who sent these oracles, be at the same time our preserver, and the physician of our ill.

CHORUS.

Oh ! dulcet-worded oracle of Jove, of what nature art thou, who hast at length come to splendid Thebes from the all-golden Pytho ? My fearful mind is all upon the rack, trembling with alarm, (Healing, Delian, Apollo,) awe-struck with reverence for thee, what thing either now or again in revolving years wilt thou perform for me. Tell me, oh daughter of golden Hope, immortal Fame. To me, first invoking thee, daughter of Jove, immortal Minerva, and thee thy sister earth-possessing Dian, who sittest upon the glorious circling throne of the forum, and thee fardarting Phœbus, ye three averters of ill, to me, oh, timely appear ! and if ever, when former calamity was hovering o'er our city, ye sent aloof the flame of woe, come ye also now. Oh come, ye Gods, for numberless sorrows I endure : my whole people is afflicted ; nor is there any °force of thought by which any man shall defend himself ; for neither does the offspring of the glorious earth mature, nor do wives in child-

° Literally, spear.

birth rise from their rueful throes; but one heaped upon another mayest thou behold, as a full-fledged bird, swifter than ^pwinged fire rushing on to the shore of the nether God; they whose city is perishing in countless multitudes. And mercilessly lie our sons void of all pity on the deathly plain; and amongst them, wives, and in addition to them, hoary matrons, here and there in different quarters as suppliants are groaning forth the lament of their mournful sufferings, by the altar: and the pæan sounds aloud, and the voice of sorrow in unison. Wherefore, oh golden, fair-visaged daughter of Jove, send us relief, and cause that furious Mars who now without the brass of shields roaring all around, encountering, inflames me, may retire with retrograde course, far from the boundary of my country, either into the capacious chamber of Amphitrite, or into the inhospitable station, the Thracian surge; (for if night, at its close, leave ought undone, this comes on the succeeding day;) him, oh! Jove my sire, who rulest the fiery lightnings, destroy by thy thunder. Lycian king! would that thy shafts invincible may be distributed from thy gold-tipped bows, applied as aids to us; and Dian's fiery splendours with which she ²¹¹¹roams o'er Lycian mounts. Thee, too, of the golden mitre, surnamed after this land; thee, Evæan, wine-empurpled Bacchus, companion of the Mænades, I invoke to draw nigh, flaming with thy splendid torch, against the God hated amongst Gods.

^p The derivation of ἀσπασάνων seems doubtful. Some say it is from α, intensive, and μένος, length—boundless; others, α, intensive, and μέγανος, to be borne along with violence.

ŒD. Thou art [still] ¹supplicating ; but as to the object of thy prayer, if thou art willing to ²hearken to my words, and to administer to thy disease, aid thou may'st receive, and alleviation of thy ills : which things, I indeed a stranger to this report, and a stranger to the deed, will fully declare to thee. [But I must have your ³cooperation,] for I myself could not proceed far in the investigation, not having any indication [to conduct me ;] but now, for at length I am become a citizen among you, my fellow-citizens, [now, I say,] I proclaim these things unto all you Cadmeans. Whosoever among you knows by whom Laius, the son of Labdacus, perished, this man I command to reveal all things to me ; and if he is afraid, screening the accusation against himself, [let him still boldly declare it,] for he shall not suffer any other harsh thing, but without harm shall ⁴quit this land. If, again, any one knows another to be the murderer belonging to a foreign land, let him not be silent, for I will be a cause of gain to him, and gratitude moreover shall accrue to him ; but if, on the other hand, ye shall be silent, and any one, either through fear for himself or a friend, shall spurn this command, 'tis right that he should hear from me, what next to these things I will do. I forbid any one of this land, whose sovereignty and throne I hold, either to receive this man, whoever he be, [into their abodes,] or address him, or make him partner in their prayers to heaven, or in their sacri-

¹ Understand some such word as ἀλκύν.

² Δίχομαι κλύω for the simple form κλύω.

³ See note d.

⁴ The present tense of the verb εἶμι has often a future sense.

fices, or distribute to him the lustral water; but all I command to thrust him from their homes, as being a pollution to us, in the manner in which the Pythian oracle of the God hath just now fully revealed to me. Such an ally am I, indeed, both to the God and to the hero who is dead. But upon the perpetrator, whether being one only he escape detection, or whether he be coupled with greater numbers, I imprecate, that he, wicked wretch, may miserably wear out his existence portionless of every good. And if he be an inmate in my house, I not being conscious of it, I pray that he may suffer the curse which I have just now called down upon these. You I charge to perform all these things, both in behalf of myself, of the God, and this land, thus expiring without fruits and under heaven's frowns. For if the affair had not been sent to us by the God, as deserving of investigation, neither was it right that you should thus suffer it to be unexpiated, the best of men, and best of kings having perished, but to sift it to its first cause. And now I am he who hold the rule which he erst held, and having his nuptial bed, and wife bearing a common offspring to both; and a common race of common sons there would have been, if his race had not been unfortunate; but now the blow of fortune hath fallen upon his head: wherefore in his behalf, as in behalf of my father, I will fight, and will come to the trial of all things, searching to take the murderer of the son of

* It will be observed that before εἰς there is an ellipse of a verb of contrary signification to the one in the preceding part of the sentence, such as, εἰλεω.

Labdacus, and Polydorus, and Cadmus before him, and Agenor of old. And I entreat the Gods, that to those who execute not these things, neither may the land produce unto them crops, nor ^a nurture the offspring of their wives; but that they may perish by the present visitation, and a still more hated one than it. But to all you other Cadmeans, to whom these things are pleasing, may assistant Justice, and all the everlasting Gods be propitious.

CHO. As thou hast comprehended me in this curse, thus, my king, will I speak, [and with satisfaction I can speak,] for I slew him not, nor can I shew the murderer; but 'twas the part of Phœbus, who sent [ordered] this investigation to say who did the deed.

ŒD. Justly thou hast spoken; but no man can constrain the Gods to what they will not.

CHO. I will tell thee what strikes my thoughts next after these.

ŒD. If there be a third thought, thou shouldst not omit to speak it.

CHO. King Tiresias, I know perceives most of all the same things with royal Phœbus, from whom any one inquiring might learn most certainly.

ŒD. But neither have I done this with ^a negligence; for, at the hint of Creon, I sent two messengers; and much I wonder he is not long since present.

^a *Αἰνία* must be construed in the sense of *ἀνέχων* or *τρέφων*.

^b *Οὐκ ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ* means the same as *σπουδαίως*;—These things have I done with diligence.

CHO. And other dark and idle tales there were.

ŒD. What sort of tales are these; for I consider every report?

CHO. 'Twas said, he died by certain travellers.

ŒD. I too have heard it; but no one knows him who saw it.

CHO. But if he has any particle of fear, he will not endure to hear such imprecations as thine.

ŒD. The man in whom there is not fear to do the deed, my words will not affright.

CHO. But there is one who will convict him; for these here are bringing the holy seer, in whom alone of human kind is truth inborn.

ŒD. Oh! thou Tiresias, who in thy mind revolvest all things, both things lawful to be known, and things secret, both things of heaven, and things of earth, although thou seest her not, nevertheless thou knowest with what sort of pest the city is afflicted; whose guardian and defender we find in thee alone, oh king. For Phœbus, if thou heardest it not from these messengers, sent in answer to us who sent to him, that the only deliverance from this ill would be, if we, having well ascertained the matter, should put to death the murderers of Laius, or send them away exiles from this land. Do thou, therefore, neither having refused us thy response derived from augury, nor [from other sources,] if thou hast any other means of divination, deliver thyself, and the city, and deliver me, and rid us of every pollution arising from the dead; for in this

✓ An inversion of case will be observed here, which is not unfrequent with the Greeks. See line 224.

we rest our hopes. And to benefit a fellow-creature from those sources which a man may have, and from which he may be able, is of toils the noblest.

TIRESIAS.

Alas ! alas ! How dreadful 'tis to know, where knowledge profits not him that has it : for having known this full well, I forgot it ; otherwise I had not come hither.

ŒD. What means this ? How dejected thou hast come !

TIR. Dismiss me to my home ; for most easily wilt thou endure thy calamity, and I mine own, if thou wilt obey me.

ŒD. Thou hast neither spoken what is lawful, nor what is friendly to this city, which nurtured thee, by thus depriving her of this thy knowledge.

TIR. [I will not speak out,] for I perceive that thy words are not of a tendency advantageous to thyself ; so will I beware, lest I be affected in the same manner.

CHO. Do not, by Heaven ! when possessed of this knowledge, deprive us of it, since we all here suppliantly beseech thee.

TIR. For ye are all fools : never will I declare my knowledge, lest I should make known thy disasters.

ŒD. What say'st thou ? Wilt thou not, though conscious of these things, declare them ; but thinkest thou to be a traitor towards us, and to be the bane of our city ?

* Τίλη λύν, the solved form of λυσέμεν.

TIR. Neither will I grieve myself, nor thee. Why dost thou in vain question me upon these things? for thou shalt not hear from me.

ŒD. Wilt thou not at length speak out, thou basest of the base? for thou wouldst enrage the very nature of a stone. But wilt thou appear thus obdurate and inflexible?

TIR. Thou blamest my temper, but perceivest not thine own at the same time dwelling within thee, but findest fault with me.

ŒD. For who would not be enraged, hearing such words with which thou dishonourest this city?

TIR. [No need is there that thou shouldst be angry at my silence,] for these things will come to light, although I bury them in silence.

ŒD. What therefore will come out, 'tis right that thou shouldst tell to me.

TIR. No more I'll speak; wherefore, if thou wilt, rage on in ire most fierce.

ŒD. Moreover I will omit nothing which I am acquainted with, in such a state of anger I am: for be assured, thou seem'st to me to have been accomplice in the deed, and to have perpetrated it, as far as not murdering him with thy hands; but if thou hadst happened to have had thine eye-sight, I should have said that this was the deed of thee alone.

TIR. * So indeed? I charge thee to abide by the proclamation which thou hast promulged, and at the

* Ironically said.

present day neither to address these, nor me, as being⁷ the impious polluter of this land.

ŒD. Hast thou thus impudently uttered this word, and thinkest thou that thou shalt escape?

TIR. I have escaped, for I nourish truth, of strength immoveable.

ŒD. By whom instructed? for 'twas not by thy art at least.

TIR. By thee; for thou hast moved me to speak against my will.

ŒD. To speak what sort of words? Speak again, that I may learn the better.

TIR. Didst thou not before understand? or dost thou ^{tempt} my words?

ŒD. [I did not understand,] so as at least to say that the matter is known; but speak again.

TIR. I say that thou art the murderer of this man, that murderer whom thou art seeking to find.

ŒD. But thou shalt not twice at least with impunity utter that reproach.

TIR. What else then shall I say, that thou mayst be enraged the more?

ŒD. As much as thou wilt, since 'twill be said in vain.

TIR. I say that thou art unconsciously holding

⁷ ὅτι; ὅτι—a change of case from the accusative to the dative. *Εὐρίπιδος* more properly would have required a dative in the first instance—*ἐνίκησεν σελ.*

⁸ Tempt me whether I shall say the same again, and not be inconsistent in my declaration.

basest intercourse with friends most dear, and seest not in what ill thou art.

ŒD. Dost thou really think that thou shalt ever say these things with impunity? ^{ye hith= triumph}

TYR. [Yes,] if there is at least any strength in truth.

ŒD. But there is, except to thyself; but in thee she dwells not, since thou art both dumb, and reft of mind, and *blind.

TYR. Wretched art thou to reproach me with these things, which every one of these, not one except, will soon bring as reproaches against thyself.

ŒD. Thou art nurtured in mere night, so that thou canst not injure me, nor any other who sees the light.

TYR. [No,] for fate is not that thou shouldst fall by me, since Apollo is sufficient, whose care 'twill be to execute these things.

ŒD. Are these the inventions of Creon, or thine own?

TYR. Creon is not the author of harm to thee, but thou art to thyself.

ŒD. Oh wealth and sovereignty, and art excelling art with a ^{much} much-wished for life, what a load of envy is treasured up with you, if, for the sake of this dominion which the city put into my hands freely given, and unsolicited, Creon, the ^b faithful Creon, that prime friend, having secretly undermined me, eagerly desires to make me an outcast; having suborned such

* Τυφλὸς κατὰ τὰ τ' ὄτα—κατὰ τοῦτι—κατὰ τ' ὄμματ'.

^b Spoken ironically.

Stranger!

a plotting ^{seer}magician as this, crafty wretch, wizard, who has his eyes only in matters of gain, but is blind in the art of divination. If otherwise, come tell me, in what respect art thou a wise seer? how didst thou not, when the enigmatical bitch was here, declare some means of deliverance to these citizens? It was not, however, in the power of any ^{foolish}ordinary man to reveal the enigma, but there was need of divination, which thou evidently did'st not seem to possess, either from birds, nor as known from any of the Gods: but I having come, I, Œdipus, who knew nothing, silenced her, having hit the sense of the enigma by the force of my judgment, not having learned it from augury—I whom thou art attempting to banish, thinking that thou shall stand by Creon's throne. To your sorrow, both thou, and he who contrived this plot, seem desirous to drive me from the land, whom thou call'st the 'polluted'; if thou did'st not wear the characters of age, to thy pain should'st thou know what things thou art harbouring in thy mind.

CHO. To us, who conjecture, the words of this man and thine, oh! Œdipus, seem to have been spoken with anger. Of such there is no need, but need there is to consider, how we shall best execute the oracles of the God.

TIR. Although thou art a king, to answer thee must be equally my right; for here I, too, have sovereignty, for I am not thy slave, but the servant of Loxias; so that I will not enrol myself under Creon as my patron. But I tell thee, since thou hast reproached me

* Ἀγλατήσιον, from ἄγος, a pollution, and ἱλάν.

also as blind, thou, even with thine eyes, seest not in what a state of ill thou art, nor where thou art dwelling, nor with whom thou art making thy abode. Dost thou then know from whom thou art descended? [Nay,] thou art unconsciously to thyself an enemy to thine own friends in realms below, and to those upon the earth. And the dread curse of both thy mother and father, smiting thee on every side, shall drive thee from this land, now indeed clearly seeing, but then in darkness. What description of place shall not be the haven of thy groans? What Cithæron shall not soon echo [to thy cries of woe,] when thou perceivest the nuptials into which, in thine own house, with prosperous course, thou has sailed, being in station insecure. But a multitude of other ills thou knowest not of, which shall happen both equally to thyself and children. Wherefore asperse both Creon and my words? for of mortals there is not one who shall ever wear out a more wretched existence than thou.

ŒD. Are these things tolerable to hear from this fellow? Go to the devil! Wilt thou not move speedily? Wilt thou not turn thy back and begone from this palace?

TR. I would not have come, unless thou hadst called me.

ŒD. [Yes, I called thee,] for I knew not that thou wouldst speak in any degree foolishly; otherwise I should have been slow in sending for thee hither.

TR. We are in thy opinion fools; but wise we seemed to the parents who begat thee.

ŒD. What parents? Stay, sir, who was my father?

TIR. This day will shew thy origin, and fall.

ŒD. How enigmatically and dark thou sayest all things.

TIR. Art not thou most excellent in finding out these things?

ŒD. Cast thy reproaches upon me in those particulars in which thou wilt find me great.

TIR. [Thou seem'st to exult.] This good fortune will, however, be thy ^d bane.

ŒD. But if I preserve this city, I care not.

TIR. I will then begone; do thou, boy, lead me.

ŒD. Lead him off then; since being present thou disturb'st the ~~affairs~~ ^{business} in hand; and when gone, thou wilt not pain us more.

TIR. Without dread of thy visage, I will speak the things for the sake of which I came, and then I will begone; for it is not in thy power any how to destroy me. I tell thee that this man, whom long since thou art searching, with threats and with proclamations, concerning the death of Laius, is here, by report a foreign sojourner, but afterwards he will appear a native of Thebes, nor will he be delighted with the event; for blind instead of seeing the light, and poor instead of rich, he will walk upon a foreign land groping out his way with a staff; and he will appear to be at the same time the brother and father of his children, and to be the son and husband of the wo-

^d "This event of your having solved the enigma, and the power which ensued." *Διόλυσιν* has here the force of the future.

man from whom he sprang, and to raise up seed from his father's wife, and to be his father's murderer. Go within, and reason upon these things; and if thou findest me false, then say that I know nothing of the art of divination.

CHORUS.

Who is the man whom the oracular Delphic rock hath declared to have perpetrated the most nefarious of deeds with murderous hands? 'Tis high time that he should employ a foot in flight more vigorous than storm-footed steeds; for, armed with fire and lightnings, the son of Jove bounds upon him, and the dread, inevitable fates follow at the same time [in the train.] For a report having just now appeared from the snow-clad Parnassus, hath clearly proclaimed that every one should search the hidden man: for he, bull like, roams beneath the covert of the rustic forest, and over caverns and rocks, wretchedly solitary, with hapless foot fleeing from the mid oracles of the land, and they are ever in full vigour hovering around him. Dreadfully therefore, yes, dreadfully does the sage augur disturb me, neither giving credit to him, nor contradicting him; but as to what I shall say, I am utterly perplexed.* I flutter on the wings of expectation, neither seeing things before me, nor the past; for what quarrel subsisted between the sons of Labdacus, or the son of Polybus, neither have I ever before or at present as yet learned, from which hav-

* Ἄνεγκεν—literally, "I am void of all means to think;"—α, negative, and, ἀνεγκες, ways and means.

ing used it as a sure test, will I, being an avenger of the secret death of Labdacus' son, accede to the popular rumour concerning Œdipus.^f But Jove and Apollo are wise, and know the affairs of mortals; but that a seer among men knows more than I, there are no true means of determining; but one man may surpass another man in wisdom: not however before I see that the declaration is true, will I contradict^g those that blame the seer. For evidently the winged maid erst came against him, and he was seen by a certain proof to be wise, and a lover of the state; wherefore in my judgment never shall he be condemned as guilty of a crime.

CREON.

My fellow-citizens, having heard that Œdipus my sovereign brings dreadful accusations against me, I am come hither, unable to endure it: for if in the present calamities he thinks that he has suffered from me ought tending to his harm, either in word or deed, I have no desire of a longer life, labouring under this ill report; for the loss arising from this rumour is not to me of simple consequence, but of the very greatest,

^f Ἐπὶ and ἡμῖν, separated by the figure tmesis. This passage may also be construed,—“I will go against Œdipus according to the promulged report;” κατὰ sub.

^g This may also be rendered,—“will I affirm those right who accuse the king.”

^h Ὀφλήσῃ κακίαν, a judicial phrase. Similar expressions occur in the Antigone, line 470,—μωρίαν ἐφλίσκων; and 1028, ibid.—σκαίτην ἐφλίσκων.

if I shall be accounted a villain in the city, a villain by thee and my friends.

CHO. But this reproach perhaps came forced rather by heat of passion than by the cool judgment of his mind.

CR. Whence did it appear that the prophet, persuaded by my counsel, speaks the words of falsehood?

CHO. These things were indeed said, but with what judgment I know not.

CR. With unaverted eyes and confident rectitude of mind, was this accusation brought against me?

CHO. I know not; for what kings do, I consider not. The king himself is now passing without the palace.

ŒDIPUS.

Sir, how didst thou come hither? Hast thou such a front of brass, as to come under my roof, being evidently my murderer, and the undoubted plunderer of my crown? Come tell me, by heavens! didst thou plot to do these things, having seen me either a coward or a fool? Or was it [thinking] that I should not discover this thy deed, guilefully creeping on me, and having discovered it, that I should not stand up in my defence? Is not then thy attempt mere foolery, without numbers and without friends, to grasp at empire, which is taken by multitudes and wealth?

CR. Dost thou know what thou art doing? Hear me in reply, and having learned, then judge.

¹ The order of the words is, *οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι*; —“Do, dost thou know

ŒD. Thou art a clever speaker, but I am not disposed to derive my information from thee, for I have found thee both an enemy, and grievous to me.

CR. Hear now this from me, which I shall urge.

ŒD. Tell me not this very thing, that thou art not guilty.

CR. If thou art of opinion that self-opinion without reason is in any degree valuable, thou thinkest not rightly.

ŒD. If thou art of opinion that injuring thy kinsman, thou shalt not undergo punishment, thou thinkest not well.

CR. I grant that thou hast spoken these things with justice; but tell me as to the calamity which thou sayest that thou hast endured.

ŒD. Didst thou persuade me, or didst thou not, that it was right I should send some one for that noble seer?

CR. Yes; and still I should give the same advice.

ŒD. How long is the time since Laius——

CR. Did what? for I understand thee not.

ŒD. Since Laius fell from the sight of all by a murderous assault?

CR. A long, long time has been counted since.

ŒD. Was this prophet then in the exercise of his art?

CR. Yes, equally wise, and in the same degree honoured as now.

how?" This is by no means uncommon amongst the Greek poets; see Eurip. Hec. 225. Aristophanes, Equites, 1155.

ŒD. Did he make mention of me at all at that time?

CR. No; not at least when I was any where by him.

ŒD. Did ye not make inquiry concerning the murdered king?

CR. We did; how could we omit it? And we learned nothing.

ŒD. How did not this wise seer declare these things?

CR. I know not; for where I am ignorant I am wont to be silent.

ŒD. Thine own affairs at least thou knowest, and if thou art wise, thou wilt speak.

CR. What nature of thing is this? for if I know it, I will not deny it.

ŒD. It is this; unless he [the seer] had conspired with thee, he would never have mentioned the murder of Laius as perpetrated by me.

CR. Whether indeed he says so, thou knowest thyself; but I claim to learn these things from thee which thou requirest the knowledge of from me.

ŒD. Learn them throughout; for I shall not even then be found a murderer.

CR. What then? Hast thou married my sister?

ŒD. 'Tis granted; there is no means of denying what thou askest me.

CR. Rulest thou equally with her, governing an equal portion of the land?

ŒD. Whate'er she wishes, she receives from me.

CR. Am not I then the third equal unto you two?

ŒD. Thou art ; and here indeed thou shew'st thyself a worthless friend.

CR. Not so, if thou at least wouldst reason with thyself, as I do. Consider this first, whether thou thinkest that any man would choose to rule in the midst of alarms, rather than in security to rest, if at least he shall possess the same privileges of empire ; neither do I myself, nor does any other who knows what wisdom is, desire to be a king rather than to perform kingly acts ; for now indeed without fear I receive all things from thee ; but if I myself were king I should do many things against my will. How then is a throne a more sweet possession to me, than rule and sovereignty free from every pain ? I am not yet so far deceived as to desire other things than honour fraught with gain. Now I bid all hail, now every one salutes myself ;^b now they who need thy favour, make me their advocate ; for to obtain all things for them rests in me : how then would I, having abandoned these things, take that empire ? The mind that thinks of noble purposes cannot become so vile : but neither am I fond of this design, (to take away thy throne,) nor would I dare to do it, leagued with others ; and as a proof that 'tis not so, for one thing, go to Pytho, and inquire if I have clearly announced unto thee the decree, and again, if thou findest me to have plotted ought in concert with the seer, thou shalt

^b Or, "Now I take delight in all, now every one gives me the friendly embrace."

not, having apprehended me, slay me with a single vote, but with two, both mine and thine : but accuse me not 'secretly, on uncertain suspicion ; 'tis not just without cause either to esteem villains good, or good men villains. To cast off a worthy friend, I call the same as to abandon life, which most of all one loves. But in time thou shalt know these things truly ; since time alone shews a man of justice ; but even in one day thou may'st know the wicked wretch.

CHO. Well hath he spoken, oh king, to a man that is cautious of falling ; for they who are precipitate to form designs are least secure from error.

ŒD. When any one swiftly forms his plots in secret, 'tis needful that I also, on my part, deliberate with speed ; but if I sit at ease, his plot will be despatched, but my affairs will fall.

CR. What then dost thou want ? to drive me from the land ?

ŒD. No—thy death ; I wish not for thy exile.

CR. Well, when thou shalt have shewn what is my hatred towards thee.

ŒD. Sayest thou that thou wilt neither yield, nor obey ?

CR. Yes ; for I see thee harbouring thoughts which are not right.

ŒD. I think of what is expedient for myself.

CR. But thou oughtest also to consult my good.

ŒD. No—thou art a villain.

CR. But if thou understandest nothing of the matter——

¹ Or, *airias* may be understood after *χρησις*.

ŒD. Still I must rule.

CR. To one who rules amiss [we must not yield obedience.]

ŒD. Oh city! city!

CR. I too share in that city, 'tis not thine only.

CHO. Cease, my lords, I see Jocasta here, opportunely coming from the palace, with whom ye ought to settle the present contest.

JOCASTA.

Why have ye raised, oh wretched men, this ill-judged strife of words? Are ye not ashamed to move your private broils, when the land is thus afflicted? Wilt thou not to thy home, and thou too, Creon, unto thine, and swell not an ill of nought into a grievous woe?

CR. Sister, thy husband wishes to do me wrong, having given me the choice of two ills, either banishment from the land, or death.

ŒD. 'Tis granted; for I have detected him, my queen, dealing basely towards me with wicked art.

CR. May I not prosper, but may I accursed perish, if I have done ought of the things to thee with which thou chargest me.

JOC. Oh! by heavens, Œdipus, believe these things, most of all revering the oath sworn by the Gods; and in the next place, both me, and these who stand by thee.

CHO. I pray thee, oh king, be persuaded willingly, and with prudence.

ŒD. In what dost thou wish then that I should yield?

CHO. Revere him who was neither before a fool, and is now under the solemn obligation of an oath.

ŒD. Knowest thou what thou art asking ?

CHO. Truly so.

ŒD. Tell me then what thou sayest.

CHO. Never cast your venerable friend dishonoured by it into an accusation upon uncertain report.

ŒD. Be now well assured, when you request these things, you seek for my destruction, or banishment from this land.

CHO. No—by the Sun, the God who is the leader of all the Gods ; since under the frown of heaven, reft of my friends, might I perish by the most bitter destruction, if I entertain this thought ; but the sinking land racks my hapless soul, and especially if the ills springing from you two add unto our former woes.

ŒD. Let him then depart, even though I must utterly perish, or by force be driven in dishonour from the land ; for I pity thy lamentable accents : but this fellow, wherever he shall be, shall be hated by me.

CR. Thou art indeed morose when yielding, but grievous when thou hast passed to the extremity of thy rage ; but such like dispositions are justly most painful for themselves to bear.

ŒD. Wilt thou not leave me, and begone ?

CR. I will go, having found thee ignorant of me ; but I am esteemed amongst these an honest man.

CHO. Queen ! why dost thou delay to conduct this man within ?

JOC. I will do it, when I have learned what has happened.

CHO. From reports a strange suspicion arose, and that which is unjust stings the heart.

JOC. Did it spring from both?

CHO. It did.

JOC. And what was the report?

CHO. Sufficient to me at least, sufficient it seems, when the land is thus in calamity, that the matter should remain where it has ceased.

ŒD. Dost thou see to what a length thou who art honest in judgment, hast come, by thus relaxing and blunting the edge of my spirit?

CHO. Oh king, not once only have I said it, but be assured again, that I should appear mad, and without the possibility of returning to my senses, if I separate myself from thee, who directed with a prosperous course our land into a secure haven, when fluctuating in a sea of troubles; and at the present day, be thou, if thou canst, the pilot of our ship.

JOC. Tell me also, by heavens! oh king, why thou art so bitterly enraged.

ŒD. I will; for I reverence thee, my queen, more than these. It is on account of Creon; he has plotted such things against me.

JOC. Say whether thou directly chargest the quarrel against him.

ŒD. He says that I am the murderer of Laius.

JOC. As being himself conscious of it, or as having learned it from another?

ŒD. No;—by sending hither a crafty soothsayer, since, with all his power, he babbles most licentiously.

JOC. Do thou now, laying aside all care of thyself in

the matter about which thou art speaking, listen unto me, and learn that there is no mortal who possesses in any degree the power of divination : and I will shew to thee concise proofs of this ; for an oracle once came to Laius, (I will not say from Phœbus himself, but from his ministers,) saying, that it was fated that he should die by his son, who should be born of me and him ;—him, however, as report prevails, foreign robbers erst murdered at the meeting of three chariot ways. But as to his son, three days had not elapsed, before he having bound together his ancles, cast him by others' hands on a pathless mountain : and by these events, Apollo neither brought it to pass that he was the murderer of his father, nor that Laius suffered from his son the dread deed which he apprehended. In such manner, terminate oracular decrees, to which pay thou no regard ; for the God himself will easily bring to light those things, the necessity of investigating which he * institutes.

ŒD. Oh ! my queen, what perplexity of soul and emotion of mind possesses me, having heard thus much.

Joc. By what solicitude agitated, sayest thou this ?

ŒD. Methinks I heard this from thee, that Laius was murdered where three chariot ways meet.

Joc. Thou didst, for it was so reported, nor has it yet ceased to be so.

ŒD. Where is the place at which the event took place ? The land is called Phocis, and the divided way from Delphi and Daulia meet there in the same track.

* Glos. *χρημα εἰς τὴν μαχίαν.*

ŒD. And what time has elapsed since these things ?

Joc. Somewhat before thou began to hold the sovereignty over this land, these things were proclaimed to the city.

ŒD. O Jove, what hast thou determined to do unto me ?

Joc. Œdipus, what is this anxious thought which racks thy mind ?

ŒD. Ask me not yet ; but, as to Laius, tell me what was his stature, and what the period of his life.

Joc. He was tall, just then silvering o'er his head with hoary locks ; and was not far different from thy form.

ŒD. Oh me ! I seem unknowingly to have just now cast myself into dreadful curses.

Joc. How sayest thou ? I tremble, my king, to look upon thee.

ŒD. Sadly do I fear, lest the prophet saw too well ; but more clearly wilt thou shew it, if thou wilt tell me one thing yet.

Joc. I dread it indeed ; but should I know it, I will tell thee what thou askest me.

ŒD. Whether did he travel thinly attended, or as becomes a king, by many guards ?

Joc. They were five in all, and amongst them was a herald ; and one car carried Laius.

ŒD. Alas ! Alas ! these things are now too clear ! Who, my queen, announced these tidings to you ?

Joc. A certain domestic, who alone returned in safety.

ŒD. Is he here at home ?

Joc. O no ! for when he returned from thence, and

both saw thee enjoying the sovereignty, and Laius dead, he besought me in suppliant posture, that I would send him to the country, and to the pasture of the herds, that he might be far as he could from the sight of this city; and I dismissed him, for this servant was worthy to receive even a greater boon than this.

ŒD. How then can he come with speed to us?

Joc. He is already present; but why dost thou desire this?

ŒD. I fear on my own account, oh! queen, lest too many things have been spoken by me, on account of which I wish to see him.

Joc. He shall indeed come; but I also am worthy, oh! king, to hear what weighs so heavily upon thy mind.

ŒD. Thou shalt not be deprived of this, since I have come to such a pitch of expectation: for to whom can I speak dearer than thou, when I am in such a crisis? My father is Polybus of Corinth, and my mother the Dorian Merope, and I was esteemed the mightiest of the citizens then, before such an event happened as was worthy indeed of wonder, but not of the care which it then caused: for a fellow at a banquet, too much charged with wine, proclaims amidst his cups that I was only the supposed son of my sire; and I grievously offended by it, with difficulty restrained myself that day; and on the following morn, going to my father and mother, I diligently searched into the matter; and they with angry feelings heard the reproach of him who uttered the base charge. I was, indeed, delighted with their manner, but still this ever used to sting my heart, for oft it crept into my thoughts. Unknown to

my father and mother I go to Pytho, and Phœbus sent me away dishonoured of the things concerning which I went. But in his declaration he announced to me miserable, dreadful, hated things ; that it was destined that I should wed my mother, produce a race for men intolerable to behold, and should be the murderer of my father who begat me : and I having heard these things, conjecturing my distance from the Corinthian land by the ¹ stars, afterwards determined to fly where I might never see the reproaches of the oracles consummated relating to myself : and in my journey, I come to this place where thou sayest that this king perished. To thee, my queen, I will speak the truth :—when I was travelling near this triple way, then both a herald, and a man mounted upon a car drawn by steeds, as thou describest, met me ; and both the charioteer and old man, violently drove me from the road ; and I in my anger smote the lackey who turned me from my path : and the aged man, having watched his opportunity, when he saw me passing by the car, with two blows struck me on the head ; he, however, paid no equal punishment, but instantly struck with my staff by this hand, he forthwith rolls supine from the middle of his car, and I slay them all. But if there is any affinity between this man and Laius, who is more wretched than I ? What man can be more hateful to the Gods ? whom it is not permitted any stranger or citizen to receive into their house, nor to address, but it is required that they drive him from their homes ;

¹ This expression is taken from the custom of mariners directing their course by the stars.

and 'twas no other than I who imposed these imprecations upon myself; besides I pollute the bed of the murdered king with my hands, by which he fell. Am I not then base? am I not altogether pollution? Although I must fly, still I must not in my banishment see mine own relatives, nor set foot upon my country's soil; else 'tis destined that I wed my mother, and murder my father Polybus, who begat and nurtured me up. Would not a person, judging that these things come upon me from a malignant genius, declare with truth? May I not then, may I not, ye hallowed Gods see this day! But grant that I may perish from the face of mortals before I see such a contaminating ill coming upon me.

CHO. To us indeed, O king, these things are painful; but, until thou mayest have learned from the servant after his arrival, cherish hope.

ŒD. So much forsooth is my hope, only to wait for the herdsman.

JOC. And when he has appeared, what will be thy confidence?

ŒD. I will tell thee; for if he be found to say the same things as thou, I at least shall have escaped the crime.

JOC. What hast thou heard from me of any moment?

ŒD. Thou saidst that he declared that "robbers slew him: if therefore he shall yet mention the same number, I slew him not; for one single man cannot be

" Κατὰ ληστές.

the same as many : but if he shall declare that one man alone perpetrated the deed, this crime then evidently verges toward me.

Joc. But be assured that the report was thus made known, and it is not in his power again to make it void ; for the city, not I alone, heard these things : if therefore he should wander from his former story, never, oh king, will he shew that the murder of Laius was committed truly and agreeably to the oracle, whom at least Loxias declared must perish by my son ; he however, hapless youth, did not slay him, but he himself perished first ; so that, on account of divination at least, I would neither look this way, nor that.

ŒD. Thou judgest rightly ; but nevertheless send some one to fetch the labourer ; do not disregard this.

Joc. I will send with all haste : but let us go into the palace, for I would not do any thing displeasing to thee.

CHORUS.

Would that fate would assist me in preserving the venerable sanctity of all words and deeds, concerning which exalted laws are proposed, having their origin in celestial air, of which Olympus alone is the author, nor did the mortal nature of men produce them, nor will oblivion ever hush them to rest. God is mighty amongst these, nor does he feel the enfeebling power of age. ! Insolence begets a tyrant ; insolence, if vainly over-satiated with many things which are neither opportune nor useful, having mounted the highest eminence, hurls him into a strait, where he cannot use

By all's fault, the tyrant is made.

an availing foot. But the investigation which tends to the good of the city, never will I entreat the God to put an end to ; never will I cease to esteem the God as my guardian ; but if any one proceed with presumption, either in deed or word, fearless of justice, and hallow not the seats of the Gods, may a hapless destiny destroy him, on account of his ill-fated delight, if he shall not justly acquire his gain, and restrain himself from things sacred, or if he shall, like a fool, adhere to things intangible. What man amongst these shall still be able to ward off the shafts of conscience from his soul ? For if such like deeds are honourable, why must I lead out my choruses ? No longer will I go with reverence to the hallowed central shrine of the earth, nor to the temple at Abœ, nor to Olympia, unless these oracles shall be approved by all mortals. But oh ! sovereign Jove, who rulest all things, if forsooth thou art rightly named, let not these things escape thee, and thy immortal, never-ending kingdom ; for they are now undermining the ancient oracles concerning Laius as failing ; and Apollo is no where conspicuous in honours, and things divine are falling to the ground.

JOCASTA.

Rulers of the land, I have bethought me to go to the temples of the Gods, bearing in my hands these chaplets, and this incense ; for Œdipus keeps his mind too highly suspended with all sorts of troubles, nor does he, as a wise man, conjecture recent events by those of more ancient date ; but he is the dupe of every one who addresses him, if he speak terrors to his

soul: since therefore by my advice I gain no ground, to thee, oh Lycian Apollo, (for thou art nearest,) I come a suppliant with these prayers, that thou mayest afford us some propitious aid; since we are now all in fear, seeing him, as it were the pilot of our ship, sadly dismayed.

MESSENGER.

Can I learn from you, oh strangers, where the palace of king Œdipus is? And most of all inform me of him, if ye know where he is.

CHO. This is the palace, and he is within, oh stranger; and this lady here is the mother of his offspring.

Mess. Then happy may she be, and ever with the happy dwell, since she is his perfectly-accomplished bride.

Joc. Mayest thou, stranger, fare the same; for thou art worthy by reason of thy friendly salutation. But tell me for what thou hast come, and what news dost thou wish to communicate?

Mess. Good news, both for the house, and thy husband.

Joc. Of what nature is it? and whence hast thou come?

Mess. From Corinth; but for the words which I shall speak, perhaps thou mayest be delighted,—how shouldst thou not?—and perhaps thou mayest grieve.

Joc. How so? What meaning so ambiguous has this news?

Mess. The natives of the Isthmian country will make him their king, as it was reported there.

Joc. Why so? Is not the aged Polybus still in power?

Mess. No—since death confines him in the tomb.

Joc. How saidst thou? is Polybus dead?

Mess. If I speak falsely, I am ready to die.

Joc. Oh! my attendant, wilt thou with all speed run and tell these things to thy lord? Ye oracles of the Gods, what are ye now? Œdipus long since, dreading lest he should slay this man, fled; and now he has died in the common course of nature, not by my lord.

ŒDIPUS.

Oh Jocasta, my beloved queen, why hast thou sent for me hither from the palace?

Joc. Listen to this man, and having heard, consider where now are the awful oracles of the God.

ŒD. Who is this man, and what tidings brings he to me?

Joc. He is from Corinth, to announce to thee as to thy father Polybus, that he is no more, but dead.

ŒD. What sayest thou, stranger? Do thou thyself inform me.

Mess. If I must first clearly announce this to thee, be thou assured that he is gone the way of death.

ŒD. Was it by treason, or by the attack of disease?

Mess. A trifling blow lays aged frames in rest.

ŒD. He then, lamented man, died as it seems by disease.

Mess. Just so; and besides this, he was the inheritor of length of days.

ŒD. Alas! alas! Why then, my queen, should a man regard the Pythian shrine, or the birds which

scream in air, since, agreeably to their predictions, I was destined to slay my father? but he having died lies beneath the earth, and I here have not touched the steel, save through regret of me he pined away: so he might have died by me. Thus Polybus lies in Hades, having taken with him the past oracles, vile and nothing worth.

Joc. Did I not long ago declare these things to thee?

ŒD. Thou didst; but I was transported by fear.

Joc. No longer admit any of these things to thy mind.

ŒD. How must I not fear my mother's bed?

Joc. Why should a man fear, of whom Fortune has the guidance? and of nothing is there clear foreknowledge. 'Tis best to live at random, as a man is able. Fear not the bridal bed of thy mother; for many have hitherto in dreams had basest intercourse: but he on whom these things make but slight impression, passes through life most easily.

ŒD. These things would have been rightly said by thee, had not my mother been alive; but since she is still in life, I must needs fear, although thou speakest well.

4.41 | Joc. The tomb of thy father throws a strong light upon this affair.

ŒD. I grant it; but there is fear whilst she breathes.

MESS. On account of what woman do ye fear?

ŒD. It is, aged man, through Merope, with whom lived Polybus.

MESS. What is there relating to her which tends to your fear?

ŒD. There is a frightful oracle sent by the God.

MESS. May it be declared, or is it not permitted by the laws divine that another should know it?

ŒD. Surely it is; for Loxias declared that it was destined that I should defile my own mother, and with my own hands shed my father's blood; wherefore Corinth long since has been far from me; with good fortune indeed to myself; but still 'tis most pleasing to see one's parents.

MESS. Didst thou, through fear of these things, become an exile from thence?

ŒD. Yes, aged man, through the wish not to become my father's murderer.

MESS. Why do not I at least release thee from thy terrors, since I have come with all good wishes for thee.

ŒD. Thou wouldst indeed in that case receive from me a worthy recompence.

MESS. For this purpose did I chiefly come, that after thy return home, I might live prosperously.

ŒD. Nevertheless I will not go to my parents.

MESS. Son, thou plainly knowest not what thou art doing.

ŒD. How so, aged man? tell me, by Heavens!

MESS. If, on these accounts, thou shrinkest from returning home.

ŒD. I fear lest Phœbus prove too true.

MESS. Can'st thou receive pollution from thy parents?

ŒD. This, this very thing, revered old man, ever affrights me.

Mess. Dost thou not perceive thy fears are groundless ?

ÆD. How so, if at least I am the son of these parents ?

Mess. Because Polybus is not at all akin to thee.

ÆD. How sayest thou ? for did not Polybus beget me ?

Mess. No more than I, but just as much.

ÆD. How can he who begat me, be the same with him who did not ?

Mess. But neither did he, nor I, beget thee.

ÆD. Why, then, did he call me son ?

Mess. Be assured, he received thee a present from my hands.

ÆD. Did he then love me so much when received from others' hands ?

Mess. Yes, for his former childless state influenced him.

ÆD. Didst thou give me to him, having bought me or begot me ?

Mess. 'Twas after having found thee in the woodland thickets of Cithæron.

ÆD. Why wast thou journeying in these places ?

Mess. There I used to watch my mountain herds.

ÆD. Wast thou, then, a herdsman, and didst thou wander there for hire ?

Mess. At that time, my son, I was thy preserver.

ÆD. What calamity, amidst my ills, didst thou find me suffering ?

Mess. Thy ancles will testify.

ÆD. Ah me ! why dost thou harrow up this ancient ill ?

Mess. I released thee, having some sharp points bored through thy feet.

ŒD. I sustained dreadful disgrace from the badges of my infancy.

Mess. Yes—so that from this circumstance thou wast called by the name which thou bearest.

ŒD. Oh! by heavens! was this done by my father or my mother?—tell me.

Mess. I know not; he who gave thee to me knows these things better than I.

ŒD. Didst thou receive me from another? didst thou not find me thyself?

Mess. No; but another herdsman delivered thee up to me.

ŒD. Who was this? Dost thou know, so that thou canst declare it?

Mess. He was said to belong to the family of Laius.

ŒD. What! to him who was erst the king of this land?

Mess. Most certainly—and this man was his herdsman.

ŒD. Is he still alive, so that I can see him?

Mess. Ye natives best know that.

ŒD. Is there amongst you who stand by, one who knows the herdsman whom he tells of, having seen him within the country, or here? Tell me, as 'tis high time that these things should be ascertained.

Cho. Methinks that he is no other than the man from the country whom thou wert before earnest to see; but Jocasta will best tell thee these things.

ŒD. My queen, art thou aware that that man whom

we just now desired to come, and the man whom this messenger speaks of, are the same?

Joc. What man? whom did he speak of? heed it not; be unwilling to treasure up in thy mind things so rashly said.

ŒD. This can never be, that I, having received such a clue, shall not make known my birth.

Joc. By heavens! seek not this, if thou hast any regard for thy life; sufficient is it that I am afflicted.

ŒD. Be of good cheer, for thou wilt not be found ignoble, not even if I shall appear triply a slave, born from a mother a slave, in the third * generation.

Joc. Still I pray thee yield to me; act not thus.

ŒD. I will not be persuaded to cease tracing these things to their origin.

Joc. Truly from my heart I advise thee what is best.

ŒD. These things which thou callest best, long since gave me pain.

Joc. Unhappy man! mayest thou never learn who thou art.

ŒD. Will some one go and bring the herdsman to me? Suffer this woman to exult in her birth of affluence.

Joc. Alas! unhappy man! for this only have I to address to thee, and these words are my last.

Cho. Why, Œdipus, is the queen gone, having rushed forth, impelled by desperate grief? I fear lest woes shall break forth from this silence.

* If my ancestors for three generations have been slaves.

ŒD. Break forth what will, still I shall wish to find my origin, although it be humble. But she perhaps (for she thinks highly as a woman) is ashamed of my ignoble birth. I, however, considering myself Fortune's son, who gives prosperity, shall not be dishonoured; for I am born of her, my mother; and the kindred months have ordained me to be both low and high: being such, I will never prove the man who will not trace out my birth.

CHORUS.

If I am a prophet, and right in my judgment, thou shalt not, by Olympus, oh Cithæron, during to-morrow's full moon, be unacquainted whether or not I shall celebrate thee as the country, and nurse, and mother of Œdipus, and whether or not thou shalt be danced upon by our choruses, as bringing acceptable things to my lords. To thee, Healing, Delian, Apollo, these things would be most pleasing. Who, my son, of the immortals bore thee? Did any nymph, woo'd by the mountain-roaming Pan or Loxias? for to him all the rural climes are dear. Whether did the king of Cylene, or did the Bacchian God, dwelling upon lofty mountains, receive thee a foundling from any of the nymphs of Helicon, with whom he mostly sports?

ŒD. If I, aged man, may conjecture, who have not yet met with him, methinks that I see the herdsman, whom we have been long searching for; for he both

* It shall not escape thy notice that I shall celebrate thee—*ὅστις μὲν εἶμι.*

agrees in length of days, and is of the same age with this man; and especially, I know the persons who are conducting him, as being my own domestics: but thou exceedest me in the knowledge of this, having perhaps somewhere seen the herdsman before.

CHO. Yes, be assured I know him, for as Laius' herdsman he was trusty, if at least any other man was.

ŒD. First I ask the Corinthian stranger; dost thou mean this man?

MESS. Yes, him whom thou beholdest.

ŒD. Come, aged man, looking here, tell me what I ask thee; didst thou belong to Laius?

SERVANT.

I was his slave; not a purchased one, but bred up at his palace.

ŒD. What sort of occupation was thy care, and what life?

SERV. Most of my days I tended the herds.

ŒD. At what places didst thou chiefly dwell?

SERV. It was Cithæron and the neighbouring country.

ŒD. Dost thou know this man, having seen him any where in this part?

SERV. Know him?—doing what?—what man meanest thou?

ŒD. This man who is here present;—hast thou yet had dealings with him?

SERV. Not so that I can readily say so from memory.

MESS. My king, it is no wonder; but I will clearly

remind him who has now forgot; for I am well aware that he knows when in the country of Cithæron, he indeed with two herds, and I with one, were near each other for three whole months, from spring until the season of Arcturus; and then in winter, I to my hut drove mine, and he his to the folds of Laius. Do I or not name any of these things as having actually taken place?

SERV. Thou sayest what is true, although after a long lapse of time.

MESS. Come, tell me now, dost thou know that thou then delivered a certain infant to me, that I might bring it up for my own?

SERV. What is this? why dost thou thus inquire?

MESS. This is he, my friend, who was then an infant.

SERV. Plague on thee! wilt thou not be silent.

ŒD. Ah, old man, chastise him not, since thy own words, rather than his, require some one to reprove them.

SERV. In what, oh best of masters, do I err?

ŒD. In not speaking as to this boy, concerning whom he questions thee.

SERV. 'Tis because he knows nothing of the matter, but rashly moves these things.

ŒD. Thou wilt not then speak willingly, but with tears shalt thou declare it.

SERV. Oh, by the Gods! strike me not, an aged man.

ŒD. Will not some one straightway bind his hands behind him?

SERV. Oh me! why is this? what dost thou wish to know?

ÆD. Didst thou give to this man the child whom he inquires of?

SERV. I did; but would that I had died on that day!

ÆD. Thou shalt come to this if thou speakest not the truth.

SERV. Much rather shall I perish if I declare it.

ÆD. This fellow, it seems, has recourse to delays.

SERV. I do not; but long since I said I gave the child.

ÆD. Whence didst thou receive him?—was he thy own, or didst thou gain him from another?

SERV. I did not indeed give up my own, but I received him from another hand.

ÆD. Was it from any of these citizens? and from what house?

SERV. Oh, by heavens! my liege, inquire not further.

ÆD. Thou shalt die, if I shall ask thee this again.

SERV. He was of offspring belonging unto Laius.

ÆD. Was he a slave, or his kinsman?

SERV. Oh me! I proceed to that which is death for me to speak.

ÆD. 'Tis death for me to hear, but still it must be heard.

SERV. He was then said to be his son; but thy queen within would best tell thee how these things are.

ÆD. For did she give him to thee?

SEK. She did, my King.

ŒD. For what purpose?

SEK. That I might destroy him.

ŒD. Oh wretched mother!

SEK. It was through fear of ill-boding oracles.

ŒD. What were they?

SEK. They said that he should slay his parents.

ŒD. How then didst thou deliver him up to this old man?

SEK. It was through pity, my liege; and I thought that he would carry him away to another land, from whence he himself was; but he has preserved him for the greatest of calamities: for be assured, if thou art he, whom this man says, thou art most unhappy.

ŒD. Alas! alas! all things will come out clearly. Oh, light! may I now behold thee this last time; I who am made known to have been born from whom I ought not, to have had intercourse which was incestuous, and to have killed whom it was criminal to destroy.

CHORUS.

Oh ye race of mortals, how I count you when living just as nothing; for what man, what man receives a greater share of happiness than just so much as to seem happy, and having seemed so, to wane away? Having thy example, thy fortune, O hapless Œdipus! no mortal do I pronounce happy:—thine, who having shot up to the highest eminence, attained to perfect bliss, when, O Jove, thou hadst destroyed the crooked-taloned oracular virgin;—when thou raised thyself up as a tower of defence against death to my country; from

which time thou wert both called my king, and wert most highly honoured, ruling in mighty Thebes; but ^{to be called.} ~~to hear of at the present,~~ who is more miserable? Who in sufferings, who in ruthless calamities, is equally the co-mate of the vicissitudes of life? Oh, illustrious Œdipus! to whom the same mighty portal sufficed for the bridal son and bridal father to fall into, how could thy incestuous intercourse be buried in silence so long? All-seeing time has discovered thee against thy will. It long since condemns the unhallowed marriage,—the parent and the offspring. Oh! son of Laius, would that I had never seen thee; for how vehemently do I bewail thee with piteous accents; and, to speak the truth, I both revived by thee, and by thee have closed my eyes in darkness.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Oh ye that are most highly honoured in this land, what deeds will ye hear of! what a spectacle will ye behold! and what mourning will ye raise! if still with kindred feeling ye regard the house of Labdacus; for, methinks, that neither the Ister nor Phasis, with their expiating streams, can wash this palace from the things which it conceals; but ills will, of their own accord, immediately come to light, and not by the compulsion of any one: and of calamities, those which appear self-chosen pain the most.

CHO. Those which we before knew fall not short of being most grievous. What speakest thou of besides these?

2 MESS. The story most brief for me to tell, and you to learn, is, divine Jocasta's dead.

CHO. Ah, miserable woman! By what cause?

2 MISS. She died by her own hand: but of the deeds which were done, the most disastrous are not known; for there was no means of seeing them. But, nevertheless, as far as I can remember, thou shalt hear the sufferings of the unhappy queen; for when indulging her rage, she passed within the door, immediately she rushed to the bridal chamber, tearing her hair with the nails of both hands; and when she had entered, having with violence closed the doors, she called upon Laius, long since a corse, making mention of her former seed by whom he died, and left her the sad office of bearing children to her own son. And she groaned over the nuptial bed, where, doubly miserable, she bore a husband from a husband, and children from her children. And how after this she died I know not; for Œdipus with shouts rushed in, in consequence of whom it was not possible to see her sad fate. But we looked upon him raving around; for he roamed about, asking us to give him a sword, and where he might find his wife,—no wife, and the mother both of himself and his children. And to him, when raving, a certain evil genius points out the way; for none of us did it, who were standing near. And he, having uttered a dreadful shriek, leaped against the doors, as if conducted by a leader, and from their sockets tore the hollow bolts, and rushed into the chamber, where, forsooth, we beheld his wife hanging, entangled in a suspended chain; and he, when he sees her, looses the suspended noose: and when she, miserable lady, lay upon the ground, what followed next was dreadful to behold; for he, having torn away the golden-studded

buckles from her robes, with which they were adorned, having raised them up, pierced the pupils of his eyes, uttering such words, That they should not behold him, neither what he suffered, nor what evils he had done, but in darkness they should hereafter look upon those whom he ought not to see, and should not know those whom he wished to know. Uttering such things, and raising up his eyelids, he oft times, and not once only, smote them; and at the same time, the bloody pupils stained his cheeks. Nor did they emit small humid drops of blood, but a black shower of blood fell at the same time in large and ^pfrequent drops. These evils burst forth from two,—not one only, but were the commingled ills of husband and wife: their former happiness was indeed really bliss; but now, at this day, there are groans, woe, death, shame. Of all the ills which can be named, not one is absent.

CHO. Is the wretched man as yet in any respite from his sufferings?

2 MESS. He calls aloud for some one to loose the bolts, and exhibit to all the Cadmeans a patricide, of his mother the —; uttering impious things, nor such as can be told by me, as if bent upon casting himself from the land, and no longer about to remain at his home, under the curse which he himself imprecated. He however needs strength, and some one to conduct him, for his ills are greater than he can bear, and he will shew himself to thee, for these bolts of the doors are opening, and thou wilt soon see such a spectacle as even an enemy would commiserate.

^p χαλάζης—literally, like hail.

CHO. Oh, calamity dreadful for men to behold! Oh, most horrible of all which I ever yet met with! What madness, wretched king, hath assailed thee? What evil genius, having bounded upon thee, hath added to thy wretched lot the weightiest of all miseries? Alas! alas! unhappy man! I cannot look upon thee, although I wish to ask thee many things, to hear many things, and to see many. What horror dost thou cause me!

ŒD. Alas! alas! wretched that I am! where in the world am I, sad wretch! whence is that voice wafted to me? Oh! Fortune, whither hast thou driven me?

CHO. Into a horrid state, not tolerable to hear of or behold.

ŒD. Oh, my hated mist of darkness! which is unutterable, unconquerable, and indeterminate! Ah, me! ah, me! again how the sting of my piercing sorrows runs through me, and the recollection of my woes!

CHO. Yes, 'tis no wonder that amidst such calamities thou shouldest doubly mourn, and have a double share of grief.

ŒD. Ah! my friend, thou art still my firm attendant; for yet thou endurest kindly to attend me, a poor blind wretch. Alas! alas! 'tis thou; for thou art not unknown to me, but, though I am blind, still full well I recognize thy voice.

CHO. Oh, thou who hast done dreadful deeds, how didst thou endure thus to mangle thy eyes? what God impelled thee to it?

ŒD. 'Twas Apollo, Apollo, my friends, who was the author of my woes, of these my dreadful sufferings. No one smote me with his hand, but I did it, I, mis-

nable man, for what did it behove me to behold, to whose eyes nothing was agreeable?

CHO. These things are as thou sayest.

ŒD. What then, my friends, is there which I can behold; what which I can love; what which I am capable of addressing is it still possible for me to hear with pleasure? Drive me hence with all speed, my friends, drive me away to bitterest destruction; me, who am most accursed, most odious of mortals to the Gods.

CHO. Equally wretched art thou on account of the state of thy mind, and of thy calamity; how I wish that I had never known thee!

ŒD. May the man perish, whoever he was, that loosed the bonds of my feet on the wild pasture, and delivered and preserved me from death, doing nothing that was agreeable to me; for had I died then, I should not have been so great a pest to my friends and myself.

CHOR. This would have been agreeable to my wish.

ŒD. I should not then have been my father's murderer, nor the bridegroom of her who bare me; but now I am wretched, the child of an impious parent, and have raised up children from her who was my mother: and if there is any ill more inveterate than another, Œdipus has been allotted this.

CHO. I know not how I can affirm that thou hast determined well; for better had'st thou not been at all, than to live blind.

ŒD. Teach me not, that these things are not for the best, nor advise me more; for I know not with what eyes, I having gone to Hades, could behold my

father, nor again my hapless mother, to both of whom I have done deeds too bad for strangling. Was then the sight of my children desirable for me to behold, 'springing as they did? No, no, not at least for my eyes. Nor was city, nor tower, nor sacred shrines of the Gods, of which I, having been brought up most nobly at Thebes, have deprived myself, charging all to drive away the impious wretch who appeared unhallowed by Gods, and the race of Laius. Could I, having shewn my pollution to be such, behold these with unaverted eyes?—far otherwise. But if there were still means of closing up the fount of hearing, I would not restrain myself from stopping every sense of my wretched frame, that I might be both blind and hear nothing; for that the sense should be beyond the reach of ills, is most sweet. Oh! Cithæron, why didst thou receive me? Why didst thou not, after thou hadst received me, immediately slay me, that I might never have shewn unto men from whence I was sprung. Oh! Polybus and Corinth, and ye ancient mansions paternal by report, what an ornament did ye nurture me up whilst the ulcer of ill was still festering within! For now I am both found to be base, and to be born of the base. Oh! ye three ways and secret groves, and thicket, and strait at the triple chariot way, which drank the blood of my father, shed by my own hand, do ye still remember me, what deeds having done amongst you, what again I did when I had come hither! Oh, nuptials! nuptials! ye gave me

* *Βλαστούς* is attracted into the same case with *ἔψυς*, although in sense it agrees with *τίκνον*.

birth, and having done so, again send forth an incestuous race, and exhibit fathers, brothers, children, of kindred blood, brides, wives, and mothers, and whatsoever amongst men is most disgraceful ! But (for 'tis not right to name what it is vile to do) hide me, by heavens ! with all speed apart from all, or slay me, or hurl me into the sea, where ye shall never again behold me. Come, deign to touch a wretched man ; be persuaded ; fear not ; for 'tis not possible that any mortal but myself can bear my ills.

CHO. But here comes Creon opportunely, to act for thee, and advise thee on the subject of your request ; since he alone, in your place, is left the guardian of the country.

ŒD. Ah me ! what shall I say to him ? what confidence will in justice be shewn by him towards me ? For I before proved myself base towards him.

CREON.

I have not come to deride thee, Œdipus, nor to reproach thee with thy present woes. But [ye Thebans] if ye still regard not the race of mortals, at least revere the all-fostering flame of royal Phœbus, when you thus expose uncovered a pollution, which neither earth, nor holy shower, nor light will endure. But with all speed conduct him within, for 'tis most pious for relatives to see and hear their kindred's ills.

ŒD. Oh, by the Gods ! since thou hast removed me from my fearful expectation, having come as the best of men to me who am most vile, obey me in one thing ; for I will speak what is to thy advantage, not to mine.

CR. What office art thou thus anxious to obtain from me?

OED. Instantly cast me from this land, where I shall not be able to have converse with any mortal.

CR. I would have done it, be thou well assured; but I wish first to inquire of the God, what must be done.

OED. His decree was made known, to slay me, the patricide, the impious wretch.

CR. These things were thus said; but, in the difficulties in which we are, 'tis better to inquire what must be done.

OED. Will ye thus inquire in behalf of a wretched man?

CR. Yes; for thou mayest now confide in the God.

OED. I both charge thee, and I will exhort thee, raise a tomb, such as thou choosest, for her who lies within the palace; for thou wilt rightly perform this for thy own relative. Let not this paternal city deign to retain me its living inmate, but suffer me to dwell on the mountain-tops, where is my own Cithæron, which my father and my mother gave to me when living, for my own proper tomb, that I may die by those who wished to destroy me. So much however I know, that neither could disease, nor any other thing undo me, for I should never, when dying, have been preserved, except for some signal calamity: but let my fate run on wherever it will. As to my offspring, Creon, towards the males shew no anxious care; they are men, so that they will not endure the penury of life wherever they are; but towards my

hapless, pitiable daughters, before whom never was my table set without food, apart from me, but all things which I might touch, of these they were wont even to partake,—towards them shew a tender care; and let me above all touch them with my hands, and bewail their woes. Come, best of men! come, thou that art generous by birth. Did I but touch them with my hands, I should seem to have them as when I used to look upon them.—What say I? By Heavens! do I not somewhere hear my dear children weeping? Has Creon in pity sent to me the dearest of my offspring? Say I what is true?

CREON.

It is so; for I am the author of these things, having known the past delight which ever touched thee.

CED. Mayest thou then prosper, and, for thus bringing them here, may a better fortune await thee, than has attended me. Oh! my children, where are ye? come hither, come to these my hands; hands of a brother, which have taught the eyes of your father, once bright, thus to see; your father, who without knowing it, and without inquiry, has proved to be your father, by her from whom I myself was sprung,—and I shed tears on you, (for I cannot behold you,) when I think of your future days, what sort of lives you must lead among men;—for to what society of citizens will ye enter? to what festival will ye go, from whence ye will not return lamented rather than the spectacle exhibited? But when ye come to marriageable years, who will be the man, who, my

daughters, taking you, will throw aside the consideration of such reproaches as are the bane both of my parents and of me ? For what base thing is absent ? Your father slew his father, married his mother, from whom he himself was sprung, and from the same begot you ; with such things ye will be reproached,—and then who will marry you ? There is no one, my children : but, forsooth, 'tis destined that you shall wane away, barren and unmarried. Oh Son of Menœceus, since thou alone art left a father unto these, for we two who gave them birth are undone, neglect them not, poor, husbandless, and wandering abroad, being akin to thee, nor suffer their calamities to be equal to mine ; but pity them, seeing them of such a tender age, destitute of every thing, except as far as regards thee : promise, generous-spirited man, pledging thy hand. And as to you two, my daughters, if ye had now understanding, I should have given you many admonitions ; but now receive this prayer from me, that ye may ever live where it is for your advantage, and that you may obtain a better life than the father who begat you !

CR. Enough ! whither will thy grief transport thee ? Go within.

ŒD. I must obey, although 'tis painful.

CR. All things are pleasant in due season.

ŒD. Knowest thou on what I am now intent ?

CR. Speak, and then by hearing I shall know.

ŒD. Send me far from the boundary of the country.

CR. Thou askest me that which is the gift of Gods.

ŒD. I am most hateful to the Gods.

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daughters, taking you, will throw aside the consideration of such reproaches as are the bane both of my parents and of me? For what base thing is absent? Your father slew his father, married his mother, from whom he himself was sprung, and from the same begot you; with such things ye will be reproached,—and then who will marry you? There is no one, my children: but, forsooth, 'tis destined that you shall wane away, barren and unmarried. Oh Son of Mœnceus, since thou alone art left a father unto these, for we two who gave them birth are undone, neglect them not, poor, husbandless, and wandering abroad, being akin to thee, nor suffer their calamities to be equal to mine; but pity them, seeing them of such a tender age, destitute of every thing, except as far as regards thee: promise, generous-spirited man, picking thy hand. And as to you two, my daughters, if ye had now understanding, I should have given you many admonitions; but now receive this prayer from me, that ye may ever live where it is for your ~~best~~

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most hateful ~~and~~

CR. Wherefore thou shalt soon obtain thy wish.

ŒD. Dost thou truly say so?

CR. What I know not, I am not wont to speak.

ŒD. Drive me now from hence.

CR. Go on now, and leave thy children.

—ŒD. By no means take these from me.

CR. Wish not to obtain all these things, for what thou hadst obtained continue not to attend thee through life.

CHO. Oh ye inhabitants of Thebes, behold into what billows of direful calamity Œdipus hath come, who unfolded the celebrated enigma, and was the best of men; who regarded not the breath of popular favour, nor the fortunes of men: so that, waiting to see the last day of a man's life, pronounce no one happy, before he shall have passed the term of his existence, without having felt the stroke of calamity.

ŒDIPUS COLONEUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ŒDIPUS.

ANTIGONE.

STRANGER.

CHORUS.

ISMENE.

THESEUS.

CREON.

POLYNICES.

MESSENGER.

ŒDIPUS COLONEUS.

ŒDIPUS.

ANTIGONE, daughter of a blind old man, whither have we come, and to the city of what men? Who, at the present day, will receive with scanty gifts the wandering Œdipus, asking indeed a little, but receiving still less than that little, and this enough for me? For my calamities, and length of days, and, in the third place, a generous spirit, teach me to be content. But, my child, if either at seats profane, or at the groves of the Gods thou seest any one, halt me, and seat me,* that we may learn where at length we are; for we come as strangers unto citizens, to learn, and to perform what we may hear.

* This may also be construed thus: "Halt me, and place me on the seats either profane or near the groves of the Gods, if thou seest any."

ANTIGONE.

Œdipus, my hapless father, the turrets which crown the city are afar off, just within sight : and this place is sacred, as we may plainly conjecture, since it flourishes with laurel, olive, and vine, and many nightingales within it warble their sweet songs. Here, upon this rude rock, rest thy limbs, for thou hast travelled a long way for an old man.

ŒD. Seat me now, and guard me, a poor blind man.

ANT. I have no need to learn this, by reason of the time [which has made it familiar to me.]

ŒD. Canst thou then inform me where we are ?

ANT. I know that here is Athens, for every traveller told us that, but the particular spot I know not : but, shall I go somewhither and inquire what the place is ?

ŒD. Yes, my child, if it is inhabited.

ANT. It is ; but methinks there is no need to go, for I see a person near us.

ŒD. Is he approaching hither, and hastening ?

ANT. Yes, he is present. Say what is suitable to thy case, as the man is here.

ŒD. Oh ! stranger, hearing from her here, who sees both for me and herself, that thou art opportunely come our visitant, to tell us concerning what we are uncertain—

STRANGER.

Before thou inquirest more, move from this seat, for thou art occupying a spot not lawful for man to tread upon.

ŒD. What is the place? to which of the Gods is it sacred?

STR. It is not permitted to man to walk therein, nor to dwell there; for the dread Goddesses inhabit it, daughters of Earth and Night.

ŒD. By what venerable name shall I address them in my prayers?^b

STR. The people here call them the all-seeing Eumenides; but other names seem good elsewhere.

ŒD. But may they propitiously receive me their suppliant! so that I may never leave the seat of this land.

STR. What means this?

ŒD. 'Tis a signal of my calamity.

STR. I have not courage to remove thee without the consent of the city, before I shall have shewn what I am doing.

ŒD. By heavens! oh stranger, dishonour me not, such a poor wanderer, in respect of the things which I earnestly beseech thee to inform me;

STR. Say on, and thou shalt not be dishonoured by me.

ŒD. What then is the place in which we walk?

STR. Whatsoever I am acquainted with, thou shalt know by attending to me. All this place is sacred, and great Neptune inhabits it; and here too is the fire-bearing God, Titan Prometheus; and the spot which thou treadest upon, is called the brazen way of

^b Literally, "hearing the venerable name of whom shall I offer up my prayers?"

this land, the bulwark of Athens ; and the neighbouring country boast the equestrian Colonus to be their founder, and called so, bear that common name. These things are so, oh stranger, not honoured in words only, but rather by familiar usage.

ŒD. Who inhabit these regions ?

STR. They truly who are called after this God.

ŒD. Who is their king ? or is the sway in the multitude ?

STR. These places are ruled by the king in the city.

ŒD. Is he one who rules with reason and with might ?

STR. He is called Theseus, son of Ægeus, their former sovereign.

ŒD. Can any of you go as a messenger to him ?

STR. What, to tell him something, or to prevail upon him to come ?

ŒD. [To tell him] that by lending a little aid, he may gain much.

STR. And what assistance can there be from one who has lost his sight ?

ŒD. Whatsoever I speak, I shall speak full of light.

STR. Knowest thou, oh stranger, that now thou mayest not err ? since thou art noble, as it seems, except in respect of thy fortune. Remain here, where thou art, until I go and announce these things to the villagers here, not to the people in the city ; for they will judge whether thou must remain, or go back again.

ŒD. My child, is the stranger gone ?

ANT. He is ; so that thou mayest, my father, speak all things in security, as being near me alone.

ŒD. Ye venerable Goddesses, of dread aspect, since now I have bent my steps to your seats first in this land, be ye not unpropitious to Phœbus and to me ; to Phœbus, who, when he decreed those many ills of mine, declared to me this cessation after a long period, when I had come to the country destined to me, that I should end my miserable existence in the place, where I should receive a habitation and hospitality from Goddesses revered, doomed to dwell an advantage to those who received me, but destruction to those who sent me, who banished me. And he promised that signs of these things should come to me, either an earthquake, or thunder, or the lightning of Jove. Now indeed I am assured that it cannot be but that a faithful omen from you hath conducted me by this way into this grove, else I could never, in my wandering, have met with you first, sober with the sober, and have rested myself upon this sacred, unhewn seat. But grant now unto me, ye Goddesses, according to the oracles of Apollo, an end and termination of my life, unless I seem to have too little of ill, being ever a slave unto the greatest calamities of mortals. Come, ye dear daughters of ancient Night ! Come Athens, called after mightiest Minerva ! Athens, most honoured city of all, pity this wretched form of Œdipus ! for this is not his former frame.

ANT. Be silent ; for certain persons marked with years are proceeding here, to visit the place where thou art sitting.

ŒD. I will be silent ; and do thou hide me out of the way within the grove, until I shall have heard what they say ; for in learning a caution is derived concerning the things to be done.

CHORUS.

Look—who is he ? where is he ? whither is he gone, that most insatiate of men ? dost thou see him ? look—call every where. It is some aged wanderer, no native of the place, else he would never have approached to the trackless grove of these invincible Goddesses, whom we tremble to address, and pass by with averted eyes, without calling upon them, silently uttering the accents of propitiatory regard. But now 'tis reported that some one, without due reverence, hath come, whom I looking for all around the grove, am not able to discover where he is.

ŒD. I am he ; for I see with my ears, as the saying is.

CHO. Oh ! dreadful art thou in aspect, and terrible to hear.

ŒD. Do not, I beseech you, look upon me as an outlaw.

CHO. Oh Jove, our defender, who is this old man ?

ŒD. Not, oh guardian of this land, one of the first portion of happiness : and I give plain proofs of it ; for otherwise I should not have crept along, directed by another's eyes ; and I, of mighty stature, have advanced here, supported by humble aid.

CHO. Alas ! thou wert, it seems, blind from thy birth, and art unhappy, and aged, as we may con-

jecture ; but as far as lies in my power, 'thou shalt not incur these curses, for thou passest, thou passest [the just boundary.] But take care that thou enter not into this hallowed verdant grove, where the bowl of water flows, commingling with the stream of honied drink. Wherefore, oh stranger, beware—change thy stand—go back ; [^d the sacred nature of the] way entirely prevents thee remaining here. Hearest thou, unhappy wanderer ? If thou hast any regard for my converse, having receded from sacred places, speak where it is lawful for all ; but before that, say not a word.

ŒD. My daughter, what resource have we ?

ANT. My father, we must practise what is agreeable to the citizens, yielding where we ought, and that willingly.

ŒD. Touch me now.

ANT. I do.

ŒD. Oh strangers, let me not be injured, since I have obeyed, and moved from my seat.

CHO. No one, aged man, shall ever drive thee from these seats against thy will.

ŒD. Shall I move onward still ?

CHO. Still further.

ŒD. Further yet ?

* Or "Thou shalt not impose these curses upon me [for not forewarning thee of thy impiety.]"

^d Or, "A length of way separates thee from us ;" (supposing that the Chorus were addressing Œdipus from beyond the precincts of the place upon which they considered it so impious to walk.)

CHO. Move him onward, virgin, for thou understandest us.

ANT. Follow, follow, my father, with thy feeble limbs whither I lead thee. Endure, a stranger in a foreign land, to abhor what the city considers hateful, and to revere what is friendly to them.

ŒD. Conduct me now, my child, where walking with piety, partly we may speak and partly hear, and not wrestle with necessity.

CHO. Stop there, nor move thy foot beyond this rocky seat opposite.

ŒD. Thus?

CHO. That is enough.

ŒD. May I sit?

CHO. Bend thyself forward a little upon this lofty rock.

ANT. Alas! 'tis my office, my father, peacefully to direct thy steps; lean thy aged frame upon this my friendly hand.

ŒD. Ah me!

CHO. Unhappy man! since thou now obeyest us, tell us who is thy father, what calamitous being art thou? I ask, what is thy country?

ŒD. Oh! strangers, I am an exile;—but do not—

CHO. What dost thou refuse, old man?

ŒD. Ask me not, ask me not who I am, nor wish to inquire farther.

CHO. What means this?

ŒD. Dreadful race!

CHO. Say on.

ŒD. My child, what shall I say?

CHO. Tell me, stranger, from whom art thou born,
on thy father's side?

ŒD. Ah me! what I suffer my child!

CHO. But speak, since thou art brought to this extremity.

ŒD. I will then, for I have no means of concealing it.

CHO. Ye make long delays, but hasten.

ŒD. Know ye any descendant of Laius?

CHO. Alas!

ŒD. The race of Labdacus?

CHO. Oh Jove!

ŒD. The wretched Œdipus?

CHO. Art thou he?

ŒD. Entertain no fear, whatsoever I say.

CHO. Alas!

ŒD. Unhappy wretch!

CHO. Alas!

ŒD. My daughter, what shall straightway befall us?

CHO. Begone! far from the boundary of the country.

ŒD. But what will become of your promises?

CHO. The destined vengeance comes upon no one for repaying the injuries he has suffered; but one act of treachery repaid by another, gives back suffering, not gratitude, to its author. Do thou begone from these seats; betake thyself with speed from the confines of my country; bring not any further necessity upon my city.

ANT. Oh! venerable strangers, since ye have not endured this my aged father, hearing the tale of involuntary deeds, pity me at least; me, oh strangers,

I beseech you, who as one sprung from your race, not beholding you with sightless eyes, supplicate in behalf of my father, that he, unhappy man, may obtain some reverence : we hapless mortals rest upon you as upon a God. But come, promise the unexpected favour ; I entreat, by whatever is dear to thee, whether it be, child, nuptials, interest, or God ; for thou canst not, by inquiry, find a man who is able to escape, if a God be the author of his misfortunes.

CHO. But be assured, daughter of Œdipus, we equally pity both thee and him on account of your calamity, but fearing the wrath of the Gods, we cannot say any thing beyond our present decree.

ŒD. What, then, is the benefit of renown, or of fair fame spreading abroad in vain ; if, at least, they say that Athens is most pious, and that she alone is able to preserve the afflicted stranger, and she alone has the power to afford him relief. Where are these things shewn to me, at least, by you, who, having removed me from these seats, afterwards drive me away, through fear of my name only ? For it is not my person, nor my crimes, [which alarm you,] since the deeds which appear in me have been rather received than perpetrated, if I may name what concerns my father and my mother, on account of which you fear me : this I well know ;—and yet how am I so criminal, who, having suffered did but repay ; so that, if knowingly I had acted, I should not have been so culpable ? And now whither I came, I came unknowingly ; but by whom I suffered, I suffered to their knowledge. Wherefore I entreat you, by the Gods, ye strangers, as ye have removed, so preserve me ;

and do not, first honouring the Gods, afterwards pay them no regard; but think that they behold both pious and impious, and that there has never yet been any means of escape [from them] to the impious wretch. Do not thou, with these, ministering to wrongful deeds, darken the splendour of happy Athens; but as thou hast received me a suppliant, under a promise, deliver me and preserve me: nor, looking upon my disfigured visage, treat me with contempt; for I came holy and pious, and bringing aid to these citizens; and when he, who is your king in just authority, shall come, then thou shalt hear and know all things:—but, in the mean time, by no means act basely toward me.

CHO. There is all need, aged stranger, with reverence to regard thy sentiments, for they have not been characterised by trifling words; but 'tis enough that the lords of this land fully know these things.

ŒD. And where, ye strangers, is the king of this country?

CHO. He occupies the paternal city of the land; but a messenger, who also sent me hither, is gone to fetch him.

ŒD. Think ye that he will have any regard or thought for a poor blind wretch, and that he will come hither without reluctance?

CHO. Truly so, when he shall have heard thy name.

ŒD. But who is there who will tell him this?

CHO. Long is the journey; but the words of travellers are wont to spread abroad; which he having heard, will soon be here: fear not this; for, aged man, thy name has reached to all, so that, although he come

leisurely, when he hears of thee he will advance with speed.

ŒD. May he then come with good fortune both to his city and to me; for what good man is not a friend to himself?

ANT. Oh heavens! what shall I say? what can I think, my father?

ŒD. What is the matter, my child?

ANT. I see a female coming near us, mounted on a Sicilian steed; and a Thessalian bonnet veils her face, shading her from the sun's rays. What shall I say?—is it she, or is it not? or does my mind deceive me? I say it is, and again it is not: I know not what to say. Alas! 'tis no other: her smiling eye, as she approaches, soothes me, and shews that 'tis no other than Ismene's self.

ŒD. How sayest thou, my child?

ANT. Know that I see thy daughter and my sister;—but we shall soon learn by her voice.

ISMENE.

Oh! salutation dearest to me,—both that of a father and a sister: with difficulty having found you, with how much pain and difficulty do I in the next place behold you!

ŒD. Oh, my child, hast thou come?

ISM. Alas! my father, dreadful to behold!

ŒD. Ah, offspring sprung from the same blood!

ISM. Unhappy race!

ŒD. Hast thou come, my child?

ISM. Not without toil.

ŒD. Touch me, my child.

ISM. I embrace you both.

ŒD. Alas! this unhappy sister and myself!

ISM. And me, the third unhappy mortal!

ŒD. My child, why hast thou come?

ISM. Through my solicitude for thee, my father.

ŒD. What! through anxiety for me?

ISM. Yes;—and to be myself the messenger of news, with my only faithful domestic.

ŒD. Thy youthful brothers, where are they?

ISM. They are where they are. Dreadful are their affairs at present.

ŒD. Oh, how assimilated are they in disposition, and in the manner of their life, to the customs of Ægypt: for there the men sit at home, working at the loom; but the wives ever procure the sustenance of life out of doors:—and of you, my children, those whom it was right should toil in these things, sit at home like women; but ye two, instead of them, endure the calamities of me, poor wretch! the one, indeed, since she passed her infant years, and gained strength of frame, ever wandering, unhappy girl, with me, conducts me in my feeble years, oft times wandering over the wild wood, famishing and bare-footed, harassed with frequent showers, and the burning heat of the sun, esteems her own support of secondary importance, if her father have but food. And thou, my child, before came bringing, unknown to the Cadmeans, all the oracles to thy father, which were decreed concerning this his person; and thou stood by me, my faithful guardian, when I was driven from the land; and now again, Ismene, what news comest thou bearing to thy father?—what errand hath sent thee from home? for

thou comest not empty-handed ;—of this I am well assured : my fear is lest thou bringest some cause of alarm to me.

ISM. The sufferings which I endured in seeking for thy habitation, where it might be, I will omit ; for I wish not to be pained, both in the endurance of them, and again in the narration of them. The ills which now attend thy unhappy sons I come to inform thee of : for first, indeed, it was their desire to resign the throne to Creon, nor to pollute the city, reasonably considering the ancient bane of thy race, which affects thy miserable house ; but now an unhappy strife, raised by some God, and a flagitious mind, both sprung between them, thrice wretched ! to seize the throne and the kingly sway. The younger, indeed, he who is inferior in years, deprives the elder Polynices of the throne, and has driven him from the country ; but he, as is the prevailing report amongst us, having gone as an exile to hollow Argos, takes to himself a new affinity and friendly associates in arms, as if the Argives, forsooth, will regain the plain of Cadmus with honour, and mount him to the skies. These things, my father, are not a mere number of words, but dreadful facts ; and when the Gods will pity thy calamities, I cannot learn.

ŒD. Hast thou now a hope that the Gods will have any regard for me, so that I shall ever be preserved ?

ISM. I have, from the present oracles.

ŒD. What are these ? What has been foretold, my child ?

ISM. That thou, both living, and when dead, wilt be sought for by the inhabitants of that country, in order to their safety.

ŒD. Who can be blessed with good fortune from such a wretch as I?

ISM. They say that their strength rests in thee.

ŒD. When I no longer exist, then it seems I become a man.

ISM. Yes;—for the Gods, who before ruined thee, now raise thee up.

ŒD. 'Tis idle to raise up an old man, who fell when he was young.

ISM. Be assured, however, that Creon, on account of these things, will shortly come, and in no long time.

ŒD. To do what, my daughter?—tell me.

ISM. To place thee near the Cadmean land, that they may have thee in their power; but thou mayest not enter the boundaries of the land.

ŒD. What aid is there from me lying at their gates?

ISM. Thy tomb not being their possession is grievous to them.

ŒD. Even without a God, any one might learn this at least by his natural sense.

ISM. On account of this, therefore, do they wish to place you near the land, not where you may be your own master.

ŒD. Will they even enshroud me in the dust of Thebes?

ISM. Nay, the blood of kindred forbids you, O father.

ŒD. Of me then sure they never shall obtain possession.

ISM. This therefore shall at some time be a heavy woe to the sons of Cadmus.

ŒD. What conjuncture having arisen, my child?

ISM. 'By thy wrath, when they shall stand at thy sepulchre.

ŒD. But from whom hearing what you pronounce, do you relate it, my child?

ISM. From men sent to consult the Gods, returning from the Delphic shrine.

ŒD. And has Phœbus declared these things to depend upon me?

ISM. So they bring report, coming to the plain of Thebe.'

ŒD. Which then of my sons heard this?

ISM. Both alike, indeed; and well do they fully know it.

ŒD. And yet did these basest wretches, when they heard this, place the kingly power before the regret of me?

ISM. I grieve to hear the intelligence; but still I bear it.

• An allusion is made to the invasion of Attica by the Thebans; and victory is of course promised to the Athenians. The whole of this play, indeed, abounds with instances of flattery, and similar presages of triumph. The poet knew his countrymen:—no people in the world were ever more easily captivated with praise, when it was bestowed upon them universally; or more credulous of calumny, when it attached to an individual.

' When the noun is in the singular, it must be understood as meaning the nymph Thebe, and is thus most poetically and correctly rendered.

ŒD. * But may the Gods never quench to them this fated strife ; and with me may the issue rest concerning this combat in which they now engage, and uplift the spear : so should neither he who now holds the sceptre and throne remain, nor he who has gone forth ever return again to the city. They, at least, neither retained nor defended me, their parent, thus with loss of honours driven out of the country ; but in expulsion was I sent away by them, and was proclaimed forth an exile. You may say that the city then reasonably vouchsafed this gift to my wishes. No, in truth ; since on that very day, when my spirit boiled, and it was sweetest to me to die, and to be stoned with stones, no one appeared to gratify this desire ; but when already, after a lapse of time, all my griefs were mellowed, and I had learnt that my anger had rushed forth too severe

* The curses, which Œdipus imprecates on his sons throughout this play, are bitter and strong, and perhaps we might add unnatural. He is what Dr. Johnson would have called “ a good hater : ”—stern and implacable, he seldom or never forgets his wrongs, and seems to feel like Lear—

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.

The cause of this may perhaps be found in the ingratitude with which Sophocles was treated by his own children. We are told by Cicero that this very play was written at the time that his sons presented a petition to court to have him removed from the management of his own affairs on account of idiocy. The poet's whole defence consisted in reading this splendid production ; and he was not only acquitted of the charge, but applauded to the skies. Happy the poet that lived amid such a people ; and happy the people that could boast of such a poet !

an avenger of my former sins, then at length, after long stay, the state drove me by force from the land. But they, offspring of a father, and able to aid a father, were unwilling to do it; and, for ^hwant of a small word, I wander abroad, an exile and a beggar. But from these two, who are virgins, I receive, as far as their nature permits them, both the sustenance of life, and security on the earth, and the offices of kindred. Those, in preference to a father, chose to sway thrones and sceptres, and to lord it o'er the land: but neither at all shall they gain me as an ally, nor shall ever any enjoyment of the empire of Cadmus come to them. This have I known, both hearing the oracles from her, and revolving in my mind at the same time the things that were of old delivered, which Phoebus hath erst consummated to me. Therefore let them both send Creon to search me out, and whosoever else is powerful in the state: for if you, oh strangers, are willing to defend me, along with these awful Goddesses, who preside o'er your people, you will procure a mighty saviour to this city, and troubles to my enemies.

CHO. Œdipus indeed is worthy of pity; both himself, and these his daughters: but since you introduce yourself in these words as the saviour of this land, I wish to recommend to you what is expedient.

^h That is, for want of a small word spoken by his sons in his defence. In this interpretation I follow Brunck, though neither one of the wisest of men, nor best of commentators. Others take *ῥῆς* in the meaning it sometimes bears of *πρὸς γὰρ*, *res*, and translate it "an account of a small crime." Granting the sins of Œdipus to have been involuntary, it would scarcely however be decent to make him talk of patricide and incest as such trifling matters.

ŒD. O dearest, interpret it to me, as now about to perform every thing.

CHO. Institute now an expiation to those divinities to whom you first came, and whose plain you have trodden.

ŒD. In what modes?—oh strangers, instruct me.

CHO. First bring sacred libations from the perennial fount, touching them with holy hands.

ŒD. And when I have taken the pure stream?

CHO. There are cups, work of a skilful artificer, the heads and double handles of which do thou crown.

ŒD. With boughs or threads? or in what way?

CHO. Wreathing them with the new-shorn wool of a young lamb.

ŒD. Well;—but as to what remains, where is it fitting that I should accomplish it?

CHO. To pour the libations, turning to the rising morn.

ŒD. Shall I pour them from these urns you speak of?

¹ The practice of turning to the sun on solemn occasions, or even addressing him as he rose, was a common superstition among the ancients. It is not exactly known what was the purport of this form; but it probably originated in the religious grandeur of the scene, and the emotions excited in the breast of the votary by the visible presence of the God. Clytemnestra, in the *Electra*, goes forth to tell her alarming dream to the rising sun:—

Τοιούτᾳ τοῦ παρόντος, ἔτιχ' Ἠλίου
δύμῳσι τοῦτο, πάλιν ἐξηγουμένου.

Cratinus also mentions it as a religious ceremony:—

Ἄγε δὲ πρὸς ἑὸν πρότον ἀπάντων ἴστα,
καὶ λαμβάνει χερσὶ Σχῆον μεγέλην.

CHO. Three streams at least; but the last entire.

ŒD. With what, having filled this, shall I offer it?—
Teach me also this.

CHO. With water and with honey. * Add no wine.

ŒD. And when the earth with dark verdure shall
have drank these?

CHO. Placing in it thrice nine boughs of olive, with
both hands, utter over them these prayers.

ŒD. These I wish to hear, for they are of the great-
est consequence.

CHO. As we call them the 'benevolent Goddesses,
that they may thus with benevolent hearts receive their
suppliant, who brings us safety, do you yourself im-
plore; or if there /is any other in your place, uttering
unintelligible sounds, and not exalting the voice. Then
slow depart, without turning back. When you have
done these things, I with confidence would stand by
you; but otherwise, oh stranger, I should be inclined
to fear concerning you.

* The Furies, for reasons better known to themselves than us, were
extremely averse to wine, and never indulged, publicly at least, in any
thing stronger than a cup from the running stream. "Witty Jack
Falstaff" would have recommended them "to leave thin potations," and
comfort their old hearts with a cup of Sherrie's sack; and after all it
does seem rather strange that they should have become so very awful
upon water.

¹ Taking advantage of their name *Eὐμενίδες*, which by the by is
another inconsistency about these venerable personages. Some have
supposed that they were called so, (like *Lucus* a non *lucendo*,) from
their character being directly opposite, of a stern and avenging na-
ture. They might not improbably, however, have been invoked by this
pretty name merely to put them in good humour, and prevent them
from displaying their real disposition.

ŒD. Oh, my daughters, do ye hear these stranger-dwellers in this land?

ANT. We have heard; and do you command what it is fitting to do.

ŒD. By me the way may not be trodden; for I am deficient in the want of power and in the want of sight,—two evils: but let one of you, going, perform these things; for I am of opinion, that one soul, if it be present with kindly feeling, will suffice in place of ten thousand in working this expiation. But with speed do ye something; only leave not me alone, for my body would not be able to crawl on unassisted, nor at least without a guide.

ISM. I go to perform it; but the place where I shall find the requisites, this I wish to learn.

CHO. In that part of this grove, oh stranger maid; and if you have need of any thing, there is a dweller in the place who will inform you.

ISM. I will then, if you please, go for this purpose: but do thou, Antigone, here watch our father; for if any one toil for a parent, it is not fitting to bear remembrance of the ^m toil.

CHO. It is dreadful indeed, oh stranger, again to awaken a grief that has already long slumbered, yet still I ⁿ long to inquire.

■ This were a fine sentiment, if it came from any lips but those of the selfish and unamiable Ismene. She cannot do the most trifling piece of service to her father without making a fuss about it, and taking credit to herself for her exertions.

■ If the chorus had been possessed of a common share of delicacy or politeness, they would have restrained their longings, especially as they seem already to have been sufficiently acquainted with the revolt-

ŒD. What is this ?

CHO. Concerning that sorrow which has arisen, wretched and inextricable, with which you have struggled.

ŒD. Do not, by thy hospitable title, open it up :—I have endured abhorred deeds.

CHO. I wish, stranger, to hear correctly that report which has spread far, and no where yet ceased.

ŒD. Woe is me !

CHO. Acquiesce, I beseech thee.

ŒD. Alas ! Alas !

CHO. Obey me, for I also [will obey you] as far as you require.

ŒD. I have endured, oh strangers, the worst of ills ; I have endured them unwillingly, Heaven knows ; and of these, nought was of my own choice.

CHO. But to what are they to be ascribed ?

ŒD. The state bound me, all ignorant, in an evil union, in the accursed bane of wedlock.

CHO. Didst thou with thy mother, as I hear, fill a bed that is horrible to name ?

ŒD. Oh me ! these things, stranger, are death to hear ; but these two from me—

CHO. How sayest thou ?

ŒD. Daughters, yet twin curses.—

CHO. ° O Jove !

ing subject. There was an awkward pause, however, occasioned by the departure of Ismene ; and they thought, perhaps, this conversation more dignified than a discourse on the state of the weather or any other vulgar topic.

° It has lately become fashionable in the schools, and elsewhere, to English °Ω Ζεῦ, for the sake of effect, by “ O God ! ” To say no-

ŒD. Sprang from the throes of a common mother.

CHO. And are they then thy daughters, and common sisters, ^p can it be, of their father?

ŒD. Woe!

CHO. Woe indeed! Thou hast suffered the gatherings of ten thousand ills.

ŒD. I have suffered things to be borne without oblivion.

CHO. Thou hast done.

ŒD. I have not done.

CHO. How, pray?

ŒD. I received a gift, which, would that I, wretched, had never merited to win from the state.

CHO. Unhappy man! what then?—thou didst commit the murder.

ŒD. What is this? and what dost thou wish to learn?

CHO. Of a father?

ŒD. Alas! thou hast inflicted sickening grief on grief.

CHO. Thou didst slay.

ŒD. I slew,—but I have—

CHO. What?

ŒD. Somewhat to justify me.

CHO. How?

ŒD. I will tell; for I both slew and destroyed un-

thing of the implety of the exclamation, it would be just as correct to translate Homer—Milton, Hannibal—Buonaparte, or Aspasia—Mrs. Clarke.

^p “Can it be?” is expressed in the emphatic particle *ys*, which is frequently used in this sense, and is not always very easy to give correctly in English.

wittingly, and innocent by law, and ignorant, I approached the deed.

CHO. But here is the king, Theseus, son of Ægeus, sent forth from the city by the fame of thee.

THESEUS.

¶ Learning from many, both in former time, the bloody destruction of your eyes, have I recognized you, O son of Laius ; and now in the way hearing of you, I the more fully know you ; for both your garb and your wretched head shew us who you are : and pitying you, unhappy Œdipus, I wish to ask you, having what supplication to me or to the state, have you come, both you yourself, and she, the unfortunate maiden by your side ? Inform me ; for you would mention some dreadful task, from which I would shrink ; since I myself at least know how a stranger, like you, I was reared abroad, and how in man's estate I struggled with the greatest number of dangers in my own person, in the land of strangers. ¶ From no one, therefore, who was a stranger, as you are now, would I turn away, so as not to assist in

¶ The character of Theseus is represented in a way that must have been highly agreeable to the descendants of the people he ruled. He is full of the most dignified and moral sentiments, and displays his generosity and pity in a very interesting manner. It might appear hyper-critical to mention our only objection, that he is, perhaps, rather stiff, and not sufficiently spirited and fiery for the boldest hero of chivalrous antiquity.

¶ Virgil had this passage in his view in his speech of Dido to Æneas :—

saving him : for I have known that I am a man, and that to me there is no more share in to-morrow's day than to you.

ŒD. Theseus, your generous spirit has displayed itself in few words, so as to require me to say little : for you have declared who I am, and from what father sprung, and from what land I came ; so that nothing more remains to me than to say what I seek, and the tale is sped. ?

TH. This very thing now teach me, in order that I may fully learn it.

ŒD. I come to bestow on you, as a gift, this my wretched body, 'no goodly object to the view, but the advantages to be derived from it are of greater consequence than fairness of form.

TH. And what good do you, coming, claim to bring ?

“ Me quoque per multos similis fortuna labores
Jactatum, hac demum voluit consistere terra.
Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.”

The bard of Mantua was apt to help himself very liberally both from the Greek and Roman authors. It would scarcely, however, be fair to say that he had been “ at a great feast of the poets, and stolen all the scraps ;” for it must be confessed that he had the taste to select the richest dainties and choicest morsels from the good things of his neighbours.

* The similarity of idiom in the Greek and English languages is remarkably striking. How completely have we the *ὁ σπουδαῖος ἄνθρωπος*, in the common phrase of “ a rum one to look at !” In the rest of the speech, to be sure, Œdipus insinuates that he would be “ a rare one to go,” which with us also is a frequent appendage to the previous clause.

ŒD. In time you may learn it, not at all at present.

TH. Why, in what time will your gift be made manifest?

ŒD. When I die, and you shall become my burier.

TH. You ask the last offices of life; but the things intermediate, you have either forgotten, or hold in no account.

ŒD. 'For there these are concentrated to me.

TH. But in a trifle you ask this favour of me.

ŒD. Look to it however: this contest is not trifling;—no, by no means.

TH. Whether do you speak of the affairs of your children, or of me?

ŒD. They would compel me to repair thither.

TH. But if they at least wish it, it is not creditable to you to fly.

ŒD. But they, when I myself wished [to remain,] did not permit me.

TH. O foolish man, anger in misfortune is not good.

ŒD. When you have heard me, school me; but at present bear with me.

TH. Instruct me, for without judgment it does not befit me to speak.

ŒD. I have suffered, O Theseus, dreadful ills on ills.

TH. Will you speak of the ancient calamity of your race?

* "In hoc enim uno, (i. e. si meam sepulturam curaveris) reliquæ illa continentur." *Musgrave.*

ŒD. No, in truth; since every one of the Greeks at least talks of this.

TH. For with what ill beyond the lot of man are you afflicted?

ŒD. Thus it is with me: I was driven from my land by my own seed; and it is never permitted me, as being the slayer of a father, to return again.

TH. How, in truth, should they send for you, so as to live apart?

ŒD. The words of heaven compel them.

TH. Dreading what suffering from oracles?

ŒD. That it is fated that they should fall by the stroke in this land.*

TH. And how should my interests and theirs become hostile?

ŒD. O dearest son of Ægeus, to the gods alone old age is not contingent, nor indeed ever to die; but every thing else does all-powerful time confound. The vigour of the earth indeed decays, and the vigour of the body decays; faith dies, and falsehood springs up; and the same gale hath never at all blown, neither to friends, nor to state towards state. For to some indeed already, and to others in after time, the things that are sweet become bitter, and again friendly. And now if every thing is prosperously tranquil to Thebes with you, infinite time will, in his course, beget an infinite number of days and nights, in which, from an insignificant cause, they will dissolve

* Œdipus, more than once in this play, is not quite correct as to the place where he denounces the fall of his sons; but poets must be allowed some licence, and prophets some mystery.

with the spear their present harmony of plighted right hands; when my sleeping and ensepulchred corpse, long cold, shall drink their warm blood, if Jove be still Jove, and Phœbus son of Jove, be true. But as it is not pleasant to utter *words that should be undisturbed, permit me to go on in the way I have begun, only preserving your own faith, and you shall never say that you received Œdipus an unprofitable inhabitant of these places here, if the Gods do not deceive me.

CHO. O king, even before hath this man shewn himself as about to consummate these, and such as these promises to this land.

TH. *Who, in truth would expel kindly feeling towards a man like this, to whom, in the first place, there is ever with us the common altar of our friendship of the spear? And next coming a suppliant of the Goddesses, he pays no small tribute to this land and to me: which things revering, I will never cast away my favour to this man; but, on the contrary, will give him a seat in the land. But if it is agreeable to the stranger to remain here, I will appoint thee *to watch him; or if it is agreeable to go along with me, I grant you, O Œdipus, deciding on one of these to

* *Τὰς ἑρμῆς ἐν* is taken by some in the way I have given it, as words of awful sanctity; by others, as meaning the fixed and unalterable oracles.

* Or it may be, "Who would reject the offered kindness of a man like this?"

* Addressing this injunction to the Chorus.

avail yourself of it; for in that way I will coincide with you.

ŒD. O Jove, mayest thou bestow thy blessings on such men as these!

TH. What then do you wish? to go to my palace?

ŒD. [I would] if at least it were lawful to me: but this here is the spot—

TH. In which you will do what? for I will not oppose you.

ŒD. In which I will conquer those who cast me out.

TH. You would boast a great gift of your residence here.

ŒD. If, while I accomplish it, there remain to you at least those things you promise.

TH. Be confident as to the part of this man, at least. I will never betray you.

ŒD. I will not indeed pledge you, like a wicked man, by an oath.

TH. You would gain nothing farther at least than by my word.

ŒD. How then will you act?

TH. Of what does the fear principally possess you?

ŒD. Men will come.

TH. But to these it will be a care.

ŒD. Take heed leaving me.

TH. Do not teach me what it befits me to do.

ŒD. There is need to one who fears.

TH. My heart does not fear.

ŒD. You know not the threats.

TH. I know that no man shall carry you hence against my will. Many a threat and many a vain

word has anger menaced ; but when the mind returns to itself, the threats are vanished. And to them, even though there has been courage given to say terrible things about taking you away, I know that the sea hither will appear long, and not to be sailed. I therefore bid you be confident, even without my care, if Phœbus conducted you : and still, though I be not present, I know that my name will protect you from suffering ill.

CHORUS.

Thou hast come, O stranger, to ^a the seats of this land, renowned for the steed ; to seats the fairest on earth, the ^bchalky Colonus ; where the vocal nightingale, chief abounding, trills her plaintive note in the green vales, tenanting the dark-hued ivy and the leafy grove of the God, untrodden [by mortal foot], teeming with fruits, impervious to the sun, and unshaken by the winds of every storm ; where Bacchus ever roams in revelry companioning his divine ^cnurses.

^a I have endeavoured to avoid the unpleasant pleonasm which deforms the opening of this beautiful chorus. I must, however, inform my readers, that it were perhaps more correctly rendered, "Thou hast come, O stranger, to the best seats of the land of this earth."

^b This is often translated, by way of being gay, "the silvery Colonus." Besides that the epithet is rather unmeaning, it is very bad taste to take any liberties which violate the locality of the scene, and destroy the natural picture to the eye.

^c It is not very clear why the nymphs should be called the nurses of Bacchus, as the only apparent reason for their following the God, was because he, on the contrary, nursed them with the juice of his grape. The expression, however, is common. Thus Eurip. Cyclop. 4.

And ever day by day the narcissus, with its beauteous clusters, bursts into bloom by heaven's dew, the ancient coronet of the mighty Goddesses, and the saffron with golden ray; nor do the ^dsleepless founts that feed the channels of Cephissus fail, but ever, each day, it rushes o'er the plains with its stainless wave, fertilizing the bosom of the earth; nor have the choirs of the Muses spurned this clime; nor Venus, too, of the golden rein. And there is a tree, such as I hear not to have ever sprung in the land of Asia, nor in the mighty Doric island of Pelops, a tree unplanted by hand, of spontaneous growth, ^eterror of the hostile spear, which flourishes chiefly in this region, the leaf of the azure olive that nourishes our young. This shall neither any one in youth nor in old age, marking for destruction, and having laid it waste with his hand, set its divinity at nought; for the eye that never closes of ^fMorian Jove regards it and the ^gblue-eyed Minerva. And I have other praise for this

^hΩ Βερίαι—

Νύμφας ἱερίας ἐλπίων ἔχον τροφούς.

Hyginus, Astron. Poet. lib. ii. 17.—“Liberum patrem—ut reddarent nutricibus Nymphis.”

^d Sophocles here avails himself of the poetical licence, at least if we may give credit in preference to the accurate Strabo;—*ὁ μὲν Καπίσιος —χυμὸς ἱερὸς τὸ πλῆθος, θεῶν δὲ μνησθῆναι τινός.*

^e Even the Lacedæmonians, in their ravages of Attica, spared this consecrated tree.

^f The sacred olives were called, for what reason it is not well known, *Μορίαι*; and the God who protected them had hence his title of Morian.

^g Blue-eyed, or azure-eyed, are as near as we can come to the unde-

mother-city to tell, the noblest gift of the mighty Divinity, the highest vaunt, that she is the nurse of chivalry, renowned for the steed and unrivalled on the main: for thou, O sovereign Neptune, son of Saturn, hast raised her to this glory, having first, in these fields, founded the bit to tame the horse; and the well-pulled oar dashed forth by the hand, bounds marvellously through the brine, tracking on the ^hhundred-footed daughters of Nereus.

ANT. O plain, highest commended with praises, now it is fitting for you to make manifest these brilliant eulogies.

ŒD. And what new event is there my child?

ANT. Creon here, oh father, approaches near us, not without attendants.

ŒD. Dearest old man, from you now already may the goal of safety appear to me.

CHO. Be confident, the safety will be present; for though I am an old man the strength of this land hath not grown old.

CREON.

Ye men, ¹indigenous inhabitants of this soil, I per-

finable γλαυκῶπις. Another translator, I observe, gives it, "brown-eyed Minerva." The Goddess must have either had a most hideous pair of ogles, or the gentleman's taste been as execrable as his scholarship.

^h This does not imply that each of the daughters had a hundred feet, but that being fifty in number, they mustered, at the usual allowance of two a-piece, this quantity altogether. The conceit is silly, mean, and unworthy of the poet.

¹ Brunck has much improved the text here, by substituting ἐγγενής

ceive from your eyes that you have felt some sudden fear at my approach, whom neither fear, nor assail with evil word ; for I come not as wishing to do any thing, since I indeed am an old man, and I know that I come to a city which, if any other in Greece, is mighty in power. But I, of such an age, was sent to persuade this man to follow me to the Cadmean plain, not from the bidding of one, but charged by all the citizens, since it appertains by affinity to me, most of all the city, to mourn the sufferings of this man. But, O wretched Œdipus, listening to me, return home : all the people of Cadmus justly invite you, and of these I most of all, in as much as, if I were not by nature the basest of men, I grieve more over your misfortunes, seeing you unhappy, being indeed a stranger, and ever a wanderer, and going in want of life's subsistence by the aid of a single attendant: whom I, wretched, never thought would have fallen into so much of contumelious suffering, as she in her misery has fallen, always ministering to you and to your person with the food of beggary, of such an age, yet not having experienced wedlock, but the prey of every one who meets her to ravish. Have I not then, oh miserable man that I am, uttered a wretched reproach against you, and me, and our whole race? But, for it is impossible to conceal the things that are exposed to the view, do you now, oh Œdipus, by the Gods of our

for the old reading, *εὐγυνής*. The epithet is used with much address by the insidious Creon ; for there was no point on which the Athenians loved more to be complimented, than on being *γαγυνής* or *αὐτόχθονος*, the aboriginal inhabitants of the soil.

country, obeying me, conceal them, having been willing to return to the city and homes of your fathers, bidding friendly farewell to this city, for she is worthy of it: but your city, at home, may with right be more revered, being of old your nurse.

ŒD. Oh thou who darest every thing, and who from every just speech extractest the devices of wile, why do you attempt these things, and why do you, a second time, wish to catch me in what I should most grieve when caught? For formerly, when I was afflicted with domestic evils, when it was agreeable to me to be exiled from the land, you were not willing to grant this favour to my wish: but when already I was satiated with anger, and it was sweet to me to spend my days in my home, then you drove me out and cast me forth; nor then was the tie of kindred by any means dear to you. And now again, when you see this city meeting me with benevolence, and all its people, you attempt to drag me away proposing harsh measures in a soft way. And yet what pleasure is this to love people against their will? as if any one to you, pressing to obtain, should grant nothing, nor wish to aid you, but to you, having your mind satisfied with what you required, should then give it when the favour procures no gratitude, would not you reap this a vain pleasure? Such things do you indeed also offer to me, in word good, but in fact evil: and to these also will I tell it, that I may prove you base. You come to take me away, not that you may conduct me home, but that you may place me by your borders, and that your city may be freed to you unhurt by evils from this land. These things are not granted to you: but those are,

my avenging spirit ever dwelling there in the land; and to my sons it is permitted to obtain at least so great a portion of the soil as only to die in. Do I not then conceive better of the affairs of Thebes than you? Much better, sure, inasmuch as I hear them from more unerring sources, from Phœbus,* and from Jove himself, who is his sire. But your falsified lips have come hither, having much tongue-doughtiness; but by your speech you will gain more harm than safety. But, for I know that I will not thus persuade you, go, and suffer us to live here; for not even faring thus, shall we live unhappily, if we are contented.

CR. Whether do you deem, in your present words, that I am more unfortunate as regards your affairs, or you, as regards your own?

ŒD. It is most agreeable to me, indeed, if you are neither able to persuade me, nor those beside me.

CR. Unhappy man, neither by time dost thou appear to have given birth to wisdom, but nourisheth the bane of old age.

*like a bane
to old age.*

ŒD. You are powerful with the tongue; but I never knew him a just man, who makes a good story out of every case.

CR. It is a different thing to speak much, and to speak to the point.

* The ancient superstition was, that Phœbus only retailed the oracles which he received from his father Jove. Thus Æschylus in the *Suppliants* :—

Σταλαῖν ὅπως τέχιστα ταῦτα γὰρ πατὴρ
Ζεὺς ἔγκαθ' Ἀοχίᾳ.

ŒD. As you forsooth utter these things both briefly and to the point.

CR. No, in truth, to whomsoever at least there is a mind like that in you.

ŒD. Depart, for I will speak also for these, nor watch me, ¹directing where it is fitting I should dwell.

CR. I call these to witness, not you, what words you give, in answer even to those who are your friends. If I should ever seize you——

ŒD. And who shall seize me against the will of these my allies?

CR. Assuredly, ^meven exclusive of these things, you shall grieve.

ŒD. With what sort of deed do you threaten this?

CR. Of your two daughters, having just seized one, I have sent her away, and the other I will quickly bear off.

ŒD. Woe is me!

CR. You will speedily have reason to wail these things more.

ŒD. Have you my child?

CR. Aye, and shall have this one too, in no long time.

ŒD. Oh strangers! What will ye do? Will ye betray me? and will ye not drive away the impious man from this land?

¹ Ἐφεσμεῖν may also be as correctly translated in the sense we always meet with it in Thucydides, "holding your station over against me."

^m That is, "exclusive of my overpowering your defenders, and carrying you off."

CHO. Away, stranger, out with speed, for neither now dost thou work what is just, nor previously didst thou.

CR. If she will not go willingly, it must be your office to conduct her away against her will.

ANT. Woe is me, unhappy woman ! Whither shall I fly ? What aid shall I gain from Gods or men ?

CHO. What doest thou, oh stranger ?

CR. I will not touch this man, but her, ^a mine own.

ŒD. Oh, princes of the land !

CHO. Oh stranger ! thou doest not what is just.

CR. It is just.

CHO. How just ?

CR. I carry away mine own.

ANT. Oh state !

CHO. What doest thou, oh stranger ? Will you not let her go ? Quickly shall you come to the trial of arms.

CR. ° Hold off.

CHO. Not from you at least, while bent on these things.

^a "My kinswoman," which she was by being the daughter of his sister Jocasta. This was but an indifferent plea, however, for carrying her off from her father.

° To shew what nonsense may be fairly put down in black and white, I beg leave to give these two speeches from the sublimely ridiculous translation of Adams :—

"CR. Keep me off.

"CHO. I will, so that thou shalt not discommend me."

This is the same gentleman whom I have before alluded to as celebrating "the brown eyes" of Minerva. "Get me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten mine imagination."

ŒD. For you war with the state, if you injure me in aught.

CHO. Have I not foretold this ?

CR. Let go the maid immediately from your hands.

CHO. Command not those things of which you are not master.

CR. I bid you let go.

CHO. And I bid you proceed on your way. Come hither, come, come, ye dwellers in the place. The city, my city, is violated by force. Hither come to me.

ANT. Oh strangers! strangers! I, wretched, am dragged away.

ŒD. Where, my child, are you for me ?

ANT. I go away by force.

ŒD. Stretch forth, my daughter, your hands.

ANT. But I have not the power.

CR. Will you not drag her away ?

ŒD. Oh wretched, wretched man that I am !

CR. No longer then on these two props shall you travel along ; but since you wish to prevail against your country and your friends, by whom I, appointed, do these things, even although king, prevail. For in time I know you will understand that you neither now do what is goodly yourself towards yourself, nor formerly did against the will of your friends, gratifying that anger which always works your ruin.

CHO. Hold there, stanger.

CR. I forbid you to touch me.

CHO. I will not, deprived at least of these two maidens, let you go.

CR. You will quickly then cause a greater pledge

to be redeemed by the city; for I will not lay hold of these two alone.

CHO. But to what will you betake yourself?

CR. Seizing hold of this man I will carry him away.

CHO. Your threat is dreadful.

CR. Believe me that it shall soon be now accomplished, if the ruler of this land prevent me not.

ŒD. O shameless voice! for will you touch me?

CR. I command you to be silent.

ŒD. No; for may not these Goddesses yet make me silent of this curse, at least against thee, who, O basest wretch, in addition to the loss of my former eyes, hast gone off, carrying away by force my only eye that was left; therefore may the all-seeing Sun of the Gods give thee thyself, and thy race, some time or other, to grow old, like me, in a life such as this.

CR. Behold ye this, ye inhabitants of this land?

ŒD. They see both thee and me; and understand that having suffered in deeds, I revenge myself on thee with words.

CR. I will not restrain my anger, but will carry him off by force, even though I am alone and slow through age.

ŒD. O wretched me!

CHO. With how much audacity hast thou come, O stranger, if you deem you shall accomplish these things!

CR. I deem I shall.

CHO. Then I no longer account this a state.

CR. In the cause of justice, even the small overcomes the great.

ŒD. Do ye hear what sort of things he utters?

CHO. Things which at least he shall not accomplish.

CR. Jove may know these things, but not thou.

CHO. But is not this insult?

CR. Yes, insult; but it must be borne.

CHO. Ho! all ye people! Ho! ye chiefs of the land! Come with speed; come, since they already are passing all bounds.

THESEUS.

What at all is this clamour? What is the matter? From what fear at all have ye checked me in the sacrifice of oxen at the altar to the ocean-God, who presides over this Colonus? Tell me, that I may know the whole, for the sake of which I have rushed hither more quickly than was agreeable to my feet.

ŒD. O dearest friend! for I recognise your voice, I have just suffered dreadful outrages at the hands of this man.

TH. Outrages of what kind? And who did you the wrong? Speak.

ŒD. Creon here, whom you see, has carried off my two, my only daughters.^p

TH. How sayest thou?

ŒD. Thou hast heard such things as I have suffered.

TH. Will not then some one of the servants, going as quickly as possible to these altars, compel all the people, both on foot and on horseback, to hasten from the sacrifice with loosened rein, where the double-

^p Literally, "the single pair (or yoke) of my daughters."

opening paths of the travellers nearest meet; that the virgins may not pass by, and I, vanquished by force, become a laughing-stock to this stranger.¹ Go, as I have commanded, with speed. And this man indeed, if I had come with the anger of which he is worthy, I would not have suffered to pass through my hands without a wound; but now, 'with those laws with which he entered the country, with those, and no other, shall he be fitted. For you shall never depart from the land; till, bringing those virgins here, you place them plain before me: since you have acted in a way unworthy of me, of those from whom you are sprung, and of the country that gave you birth: you who entering a state that practises justice, and ratifies nothing without the law, and then, disregarding the authorities of this land by this irruption, carry off what you choose, and make them subject to you by force. And to me; you must have thought that there was a city destitute of citizens, or slavish, and that I was the same as nobody. And yet Thebes, at least, did not teach you to be base; for she is not wont to nurse unjust men, nor would she praise you; if she heard of you violating my rights, and those of the Gods, carrying away by force the suppliant bodies of wretched mortals. Wherefore I, entering your country, though I had the justest pretences in the world, would not,

¹ Either to Creon, for not being able to prevent his success, or to Œdipus, for not having fulfilled the promises of protection and security made to him.

² That is, "Quandoquidem sub amici specie venit, non pro hoste habebitur." *Musgrave*.

without the sovereign of the land, at least, whosoever he were, have either dragged or carried away; but I would have known how it were proper for a stranger to conduct himself among citizens. But you yourself disgrace your own country, not worthy of reproach, and increasing years make you at once an old man and a dotard. I have said then both before, and I repeat it now, let some one, as quickly as possible, bring hither the maidens, unless you wish to become a 'foreign dweller in this land by force and against your will; and this sentence I pronounce to you equally with my mind and with my tongue.

CHO. Do you see to what you have come, O stranger? so that by those from whom you are sprung you appear just, but are detected in doing what is base.

CR. I, neither considering this city without citizens, oh! son of Ægeus, nor without counsel, as you allege, have achieved this deed; but conceiving that no such violent love of my kindred would ever fall on these men, so that they would maintain them against my will. And I knew that they would not receive a parricide and wretch impure, nor one to whom there was found subsisting the unhallowed marriage of child [with mother.] Of this nature I knew with them the

* *Méroux*; was the name appropriated to designate a foreigner resident in Athens. There was a very large class of this description, as we may see by the numbers of them that went out in various expeditions during the Peloponnesian war. It is in this body that Theseus threatens to incorporate Creon, adding, for the sake of perspicuity rather than brevity, that it should not only be by force, but also against his will.

Areopagus sage council 'coeval with the soil, which does not permit such wandering beggars to dwell together in this city. On it relying I essayed this prey; and I would not have done so had he not imprecated bitter curses on me myself, and on my race. In return for which, I having suffered, thought fit to make this retaliation. For of anger there is no other old age except in death, but no grief affects the dead. You will therefore do whatsoever you please, since my being alone, even though I say what is just, makes me feeble. But to deeds, nevertheless, even being aged as I am, I will endeavour to make requital.

Ed. O shameless audacity! whom do you think you insult in this, whether me, an old man, or yourself? who have uttered to me from your lips the slaughters, and marriages, and calamities, which I, wretched, have unwillingly endured. For it was thus pleasing to the Gods, "perhaps of old, bearing wrath for some offence

* *Xôviov* is translated by some, "subterraneous," referring it to the manner in which the council sat, always in the dark, and deep below ground. The compliments which Creon pays it are just; for though the nature of it be not so well known as might be wished, there is little doubt that it was one of the wisest and best institutions of antiquity. The proof of this is found in its rigid and impartial administration during the most corrupt times, and in its duration and reverence long after the more splendid glories of Athens were all departed.

* The Calvinism, or rather the fatalism of the Greeks, was very strong. They implicitly believed in a predestined chain of evils, commencing with the guilty deed of some individual, and continuing through all his future race, till vengeance was fully wreaked by its extermination. The tragedians avail themselves very successfully of this superstition, and the principle is in itself, indeed, finely calcu-

against the race : since in myself at least you would not find any stain of guilt, in return for which I perpetrated these sins against myself and my kindred. For tell me, if the annunciation of Heaven had come to my father by oracles, that he should die by his children, how can you justly cast up this to me, who had not at all any generative increase from father or mother, but was then unborn. And if again, when born to misery, as I was born, I came to combat with my father, and slew him, unweening of any thing I did, and against whom I did it ; how, at least, could you justly censure that which was sure an unwilling deed ? And are you not ashamed, wretch, to make me speak of the marriage of my mother, who was your sister, a marriage such as I shall speedily declare ; for I therefore will not be silent, you at least having proceeded to this unhalloved tale. For she bore me, woe is me for my miseries ! she ignorant, bore me ignorant, and having given me birth she produced to me children, her own reproach. But one thing, at least, then I know, that you indeed willingly have in these words reviled me and her, and that I unwillingly married her, and unwillingly mention this. * Yet neither in this marriage shall I be talked of as wicked, nor in

lated for heightening dramatic effect. There is something fearful in the darkling way in which the devoted victims of heaven's wrath are hurried on to penal destruction ; while there is an admirable opportunity afforded, by the innocence of the principal sufferer, to awaken and justify the sympathy of the audience.

* The justification which *Edipus* offers of himself in this speech is a little inconsistent with the violent remorse which he elsewhere

the slaughter of my father, which you always cast up to me, bitterly upbraiding me. For answer me only one thing of what I ask you. If any one standing by here should immediately attempt to slay you, the upright man, whether would you inquire if your father were the murderer, or would you straightway avenge yourself on him? I think, indeed, if you love life, that you would take vengeance on the guilty, nor would consider what is just. In such evils I have also involved myself, the Gods impelling me; to which declaration I deem that the soul of my father, though in life, would not say the contrary. But you, (for you are not just, but deem every thing proper to mention, words that may, and words that may not be spoken,) reproach me with such things in the presence of these men. And yet it seems honourable to you to flatter the name of Theseus and Athens, how nobly she is inhabited; and while you thus praise many things, you forget this one, that if any land knows to worship the Gods with honours, in that this land excels, from which you have endeavoured to steal away me, myself, an aged suppliant, and have gone off with my daughters. In return for which, I now, invoking these Goddesses, supplicate them and enjoin them in my prayers, to come my allies, and aid, in order that you

exhibits. He was incensed, however, by the remarks of Creon, and might feel like many other people, who talk freely of their own imperfections, and yet get very wroth if their neighbours take the same liberty.

Or, "how nobly she is constituted."

may well learn by what sort of men this city is guarded.

CR. The stranger, oh king! is virtuous; but his sufferings are utterly ruinous, and worthy of protection.

TH. There is enough of words, since the ravishers indeed hasten away, and we, the sufferers, stand still.

CR. What in truth do you command to a feeble man to do?

TH. To begin the way thither, and to go a guide to me, in order that, if you have our maidens in these places, you yourself may shew them to me. But if those who have them in their power fly, there is no need to take the trouble; for there are others who hasten, whom, never having escaped out of this country, shall they fulfil their vows to the Gods. But lead on the way, and know that seizing, you are seized, and that fortune hath taken you, the hunter; for possessions acquired by unjust guile are not preserved. And you shall have no other one to assist you in these things; since I know, from the daring at present exhibited, that you have not come unattended or unarmed for such great insults: but there is something, on which relying, you have done these things which it behoves me to examine, nor to make this city weaker than a single man. Understand you aught of these words? or do they appear to you to have been vainly spoken, both just now, and when you designed this deed?

CR. You will say nothing here to be found fault with by me; but at home we too shall know what it is fitting to do.

TH. Going now threaten. But do you, oh Œdipus, remain here to us in quiet, believing that if I do not first die, I shall not cease until I put you in possession of your children.

Œd. May you be blest, oh Theseus! both for the sake of your generous spirit, and your righteous provident care of us.

CHORUS.

Would that I were where the gatherings of hostile men will quickly mingle in the brazen din of battle, either by the ^aPythian shrines, or the ^agleaming shores, where the awful Goddesses foster for the ^bworld those hallowed rites of which the golden key hath even come upon the tongue of the ministering ^cEumolpidæ. There methinks that Theseus awaking the fight, and the twin virgin sisters will quickly engage with prevailing shouts in these regions: or somewhere are they approaching from Æa's pastures, the western ridge of the snowy rock, flying on steeds, or with racings that whirl along the car? Dreadful will the martial spirit of the natives be found, and dreadful the might of the sons of The-

^a The shrine alluded to was dedicated to the Pythian Apollo at Marathon.

^a Gleaming with the sacred torches made use of in the Eleusinian mysteries.

^b There is something in the mystery and solemnity of this expression that would half induce one to believe in Warburton's theory of the worship of the one and true God being preserved at Eleusis.

^c The Scholiasts give us different accounts of the first Eumolpus; but whoever he may have been, his descendants retained his name and office of priesthood at Eleusis.

seus : for every bit is gleaming, and every one is hastening to mount the steeds with frontlet trappings,—they who honour equestrian Minerva, and the earth-encircling king of ocean, Rhea's dear son. Do they fight? or are they on ^d the point of engaging? How my mind presages something to me, that ^e they will quickly give up her who has endured dreadful things, and met with dreadful sufferings at the hands of her kindred! There will accomplish,—Jove will accomplish something this day. I am the prophet of successful strife. Would that I a dove borne fleet as the whirlwind, with the speed of strength, might meet with an ethereal cloud, and view with mine own eye the heat of the affray! O Jove, omnipotent of Gods, whose eye is over all, grant to the leaders of the people of this land in conquering strength to crown their ambush with the glorious prey; and thy hallowed daughter, Pallas Minerva; and the hunter, Apollo, and his sister, that pursues the swift-footed dappled fawns,—I implore to come with their double aid to this land and to its sons. —Oh wandering stranger, you will not say to your watchman that he is a false prophet, for I see these virgins again hither near approaching.

ŒD. Where? where?—What say you?—How said you?

ANT. Oh father! father! which of the Gods would grant you to behold this best of men, who has sent us hither to you?

^d *Μίλλουσι* is foolishly given by Brunck “*morantur*,” which is not only false to the meaning, but totally does away with the energy of the passage.

^e The attendants of Creon.

ŒD. Oh my child, are ye two present?

ANT. Yes; for these hands of Theseus, and of his dearest attendants, have preserved us.

ŒD. Come hither, oh daughter! to your father, and grant me to touch that body which I never hoped would have returned.

ANT. You ask what you shall obtain; for the favour is with 'desire.

ŒD. Where, in truth, where are ye?

ANT. Here we are, approaching together.

ŒD. Oh dearest sprouts!

ANT. To its author every thing is 'dear.

ŒD. Oh props of a man—

ANT. Of an unhappy man, though, the unhappy props—

ŒD. I clasp what is dearest to me; nor would I any longer be utterly wretched in death, you two standing by me. Firmly cling, oh my child, to both my sides; implant yourselves in your ^b planter, and make me to cease from my former solitary and wretched wandering; and tell me what has been done, as briefly as possible, since few words suffice to virgins of such an age.

ANT. This here is he who preserved us: to him it is

† ἐνὶ πλάτῃ γὰρ ἡ χάρις, i. e. gratiam petis quam ipsæ ultro præstare cupidissimæ sumus. *Musgrave.*

‡ Those who wish to find a very singular account of this principle may consult Aristotle's *Ethics*. One of his illustrations is too good to omit: "A mother loves a child more than a father, because she is more certain that it is her own!"

^b In attempting to translate this literally, I have been guilty of much harshness; sed transeat cum ceteris.

fitting to listen, oh father? and to you at least my business will thus be brief.

ŒD. O stranger, wonder not at my vehemence, if, my children having unexpectedly appeared, I lengthen my words! for I know that this delight, given by you to me in them, has arisen from no other; for you have preserved them, and no other mortal. And may the Gods give to you, as I wish, both to yourself and this land; since among you, at least, alone of men, have I found piety, and equity, and truth. And having experienced them, I repay them with these words; for I have what I have through you, and no other mortal. And stretch out, oh king, your right hand to me, that I may touch it, and kiss, if it be lawful, your brow. And yet what do I say? How should I, who have been miserable, wish to touch a man with whom there is no stain of evils an inmate? I will not touch you, nor, therefore, will I permit you [to touch me]; for it is possible only to such mortals as have had experience of them; to join in supporting miseries like these. But do you, from that spot, receive my farewell, and for the future justly take care of me, as you have done to this present time.

TH. Neither if you have made the length of your words greater, being delighted with these children, do I wonder; nor if, in preference to me, you have first chosen their conversation; for no displeasure from these things possesses me: for I do not strive to make my life more glorious by words than by deeds. And I prove it: for of those things which I swore, I have deceived you, old man, in nothing: for I am present, bringing these virgins alive, uninjured by what was

threatened against them. And how, indeed, this contest was won,—what need is there vainly to vaunt that, which you, at any rate, will learn yourself from these two, associating with them? But apply your mind to the tale that has just met me, coming hither, since it is trifling indeed to tell, but worthy to excite wonder: and it is fitting that a man should neglect no ¹ matter.

CED. And what is it, son of Ægeus? Instruct me, as I myself know nothing of those things of which you are informed.

TH. They say that some man, being no fellow-citizen indeed of yours, but a kinsman, sits somehow a suppliant at the altar of Neptune, by which I chanced to be sacrificing when I rushed away.

CED. Of what country? Seeking what by this supplicatory posture?

TH. I know but one thing; for he requests, as they tell me, a short conversation with you, not full of trouble.

CED. Of what kind?—for this sitting by the altar is of no slight import.

TH. They say that he, coming, requests to arrive at a conversation with you, and to depart without injury from his journey hither.

¹ Benedict suggests the reading of *οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων*, on which he very plausibly observes: *Quæ verba jam cum Terentiano illo: homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto, consentiunt. Dux reliquæ lectiones hunc sensum produunt: Hominis non esse, ullum vilipendere negotium. Quæ sententia, cum certe negotia quædam hominum contemptu digna sint, ne vera quidem dici meretur.*

ŒD. Who then can he be who sits in this posture?

TH. See if at Argos there be any kinsman to you, who would seek to obtain this from you.

ŒD. Oh, dearest friend, hold where you are.

TH. What is the matter with you?

ŒD. Ask me not.

TH. Of what sort of thing?—speak.

ŒD. I fully know, hearing these ^kwords, who is the suppliant.

TH. And who at all is he whom I should have cause to reprehend?

ŒD. Oh king! it is my hated son, whose words most painfully of all men would I endure to hear.

TH. But why? Is it not permitted you to hear and to refrain from doing what you do not wish? Why is it disagreeable to you to listen?

ŒD. This voice, oh king! comes most hateful to a father; and do not urge me of necessity to grant this request.

TH. But if his seat compel you, consider if the reverence of the Divinity be not to be observed.

ANT. Father, obey me, though young I give advice. Suffer ^lthis man to give gratification to his own mind, and to the God what he wishes; and to us twain grant that our brother should come: for be confident, that

^k ἀκούων τῶνδ' sc. λόγων. Brumoy conceives παῖδων to be the word understood: "Antigone et sa sœur devinent que c'est leur frere Poly-nice, et elles le disent à leur pere." Pray what is the occasion of giving the young ladies more penetration than their father? The words of Theseus were so plain, that Œdipus, except he were deaf as well as blind, must have very easily made out the matter.

^l Theseus, not Polynices.

whatever he shall say inexpedient to you, will not pervert you by force from your purpose. And what hurt is it to hear words?—works of the most glorious invention are known by words. You begat him: so that neither, oh father, though he did to you the worst of most impious wrongs, is it lawful for you at least to repay him with ^m evil?—but suffer him; there are also to others bad children and fierce anger, but admonished by the incantations of friends, they are charmed out of their nature. But do you not now look back to those sufferings from father and mother which you endured; though even if you look on them, I know you will perceive the end of evil anger, how it comes in addition evil: for you bear no slight impressions of this, being deprived of your sightless eyes. But yield to us, for it is not good for those who request what is just to press, nor for you yourself to receive benefits, and having received, not to know to repay them.

ŒD. My child, ye gain from me by your speeches a reluctant pleasure. Let it be then as is agreeable to you, only, friend, if he shall come hither, let no one ever have power over my life.

TH. Once, old man, not twice, do I seek to hear such requests. I wish not to boast, but know that you are safe, if any one of the Gods shall also preserve me.

^m The character of Antigone always appears in the most amiable light. Her sentiments breathe at once of the purest sisterly love, and of a spirit of forgiveness almost worthy of a Christian.

CHORUS.

Whoever seeks to live for a lengthened term, neglecting the mean, will be proved ^aby my case to cherish folly; since oft has length of days brought pain nearer, and you can see nought of joy when, at least any one may meet with more than his wishes require; nor is there satiety that ends but with the grave, when that fate hath appeared that is repugnant to the nuptial lay, the lyre, and the dance, and death to close the scene. Not to have been born at all is superior to every view of the question; and this, when one may have seen the light, to return thence whence he came as quickly as possible, is far the next best. For when youth comes bringing light folly, who ^owanders without the pale of many sorrows?—what suffering is not there?—murders, factions, strife, battle, and envy: and loathsome old age hath gained the last scene,—impotent, unsociable, friendless old age, where all ills, worst of ills, dwell together. In which state this wretched man, not I alone, as some promontory exposed to the north, is beaten on all sides by the dashings of the billows in the winter storm;—thus also dreadful calamities, bursting like waves over his head, ever present beat on him,—some indeed from the setting of the sun, and some from his rise, and some from his mid-day beam, and some from the twinklings of the stars of night. ^p

^a Or, in my mind.

^o Τίς ἔγω τοῦ πολέμοις εἶναι ἐπλανήθη. Scholiast.

^p The poet, who through the whole of this chorus has been comfortably obscure, works himself up by the end of it into absolute mysti-

ANT. And in truth hitherward to us, as appears, the stranger, oh father! unaccompanied, at least, by men, takes his way, shedding [†]copiously tears from his eyes.

ŒD. Who is he?

ANT. Even whom we formerly conceived in mind;—Polynices is here present.

POLYNICES.

Woe is me! what shall I do? Whether, sisters, shall I first weep over my own misfortunes, or those that I behold of my aged father? whom, on a foreign soil, I have found, with you two here, cast out, clothed in such a garment, whose loathsome aged filth hath fixed itself on the old man, wasting away his body, and on his sightless head his uncombed hair streams to the wind; and, congenial to these, it appears he has the food of his wretched belly. All which things I, utterly abandoned wretch! too late learn: [†]and I call you to witness that I have come, the worst of men, in providing for your support: seek not this by inquiry from others. But since over every work is Mercy joint assessor to Jove on his throne, let her, oh father! also take her stand by thee; for of transgressions there is

cism. It seems like an imitation of the worst style of Æschylus, and bears very few marks of the correctness and good taste for which Sophocles is usually distinguished.

[†] *ἀστυαι*, not in drops, but in showers.

[†] Some give the meaning of this passage thus: "I call you to witness, that though I am the worst of men, I have now come to provide for your support." This is plausible enough; but what immediately follows, *τοῦτο μὲν ἐξ ἄλλων πύθη*, makes it much more like an acknowledgment of guilt.

'remedy, though no longer recal. Why are you silent? —speak something, oh father! do not turn away from me. Will you not answer any thing to me, but send me away, dishonouring me, without speaking a word, or telling at what you are angry? Oh daughters of this man, and sisters of mine, but do you at least attempt to awaken our father's words, difficult to gain, and devoid of affability, that he may not thus, at any rate, send me away dishonoured, 'who am of the God at least the suppliant, without replying to me a single word.

ANT. Speak, oh unhappy man! yourself, by reason of the want of what you are present; for oft have words, either causing some delight or displeasure, or moving somehow to pity, given some speech to the silent.

POL. But I will speak out, [for well you direct me,] first making the God himself my ally, from whose altar the king of the land raised me up to come hither, giving me both to speak and to hear with safe departure; and these boons, oh strangers, I should wish to gain from you, and from these, my sisters and from my father. But for what purpose I have come, I now wish, oh father, to tell you. I have been driven forth an exile from my native soil because I claimed, being sprung from elder birth, to sit on thy imperial throne.

* This is another disputed point. The Scholiast, whom I follow, explains *προσφορά* as meaning *ἐκπρόκλησις*: Brunck, "expromptio:" and Musgrave supplies *τῶν ἀπῶν* after *προσφορά*. *Remedia quidem adsumunt, sed ea admoveere non licet.*

† He must pay regard to me, as the suppliant of the God, though he feel no affection for me as his son.

Wherefore, Eteocles, being by birth the younger, drove me out of the land ; neither having conquered me by question of right, nor having come to the trial of hand or deed, but having persuaded the city : of which misfortunes I account your "imprecated vengeance to have been the principal cause, and then from prophets I also hear it declared in this way. For when I came to Doric Argos, having gained Adrastus as my father-in-law, I procured sworn associates to myself, as many as are styled the chiefs of the "Apian land and are honoured in war, in order that, having assembled with these, an expedition, led by seven-spears, against Thebes, I might either 'rightfully fall, or drive forth from the land those who wrought these deeds. Well, enough ; why in truth do I now chance to have come ? I have come, oh father, bringing suppliant prayers to you ; I myself, at least, for myself ; and for my allies, who now with seven squadrons and with seven spears, encircle all the plain of Thebe ; such as is Amphiaraus, the shaker of the spear, holding the first place in war, and the first in the paths of birds : and the second is an Ætolian, Tydeus, son of Æneus : and the third is Eteoclus, by birth an

" Literally " your Erynnis," a Goddess who had the amiable task of presiding over curses and revenge.

" Apia was the old name of the Peloponnesus. The origin of it is given, though with no great probability, in the Supplices of Æschylus, 268.

y Musgrave takes *πανδικος* along with *ἀγύρας* ; and Benedict, with *ἐκβάλοιμι*. There is no great occasion for forcing it so violently out of its natural place. Polynices means to say that if he fell in attempting to regain his own, he would fall at least in a rightful cause.

Argive: his father Talaus hath sent Hippomedon the fourth: Capaneus, the fifth, boasts that he will quickly in overthrow lay waste the city of Thebe: and the Arcadian Parthenopæus rushes the sixth, bearing the name of his mother, in former time long a virgin, having sprung from her throes, Atalanta's genuine son: and I, thy son; if not thy son, but sprung from evil doom, yet called at least thine, lead the fearless host of Argos against Thebes: who all in supplication implore thee, O father, by these thy children, and by thy life, to mitigate thy heavy wrath against me, proceeding to the punishment of my brother, who drove me out, and robbed me of my country. For if there be any faith in oracles, with whomsoever you may join, to these the God declared that the victory would be. Now by our native fountains* and our kindred Gods, I implore you to obey me, and to yield from your purpose, since we are poor and strangers, and you a stranger; and you and I live paying court to others, having gained by lot the same fortune. But he at home a king, unhappy me! laughing in common at us, pampers himself up: whom, if you accord with my inclinations, I will overthrow with slight trouble and time; so that, bringing you, I shall place you in your palace, and place myself there, driving out him by force. And this, if you assent to my

* Nothing can be more beautiful and impressive than this appeal: even the old muddled Scholiast is affected by it: πανθητικόν ἔστι τὸ πρὸς πατρίῳι κρητὶ ὀρεῖν, ὡς ἡ Ἰφί, πρὸς τῶν ἐκδυσφύκτων οἱ ἰδία τῶν.

wish, it is allowed me to boast; but without you, I am not even able to be saved.

CHO. Having said, oh Œdipus! to this man, for the sake of him that sent him, what is expedient, again send him back.

ŒD. But if indeed, ye men, Theseus, the ruler of the people of this land, had not chanced to send him hither to me, claiming that he should hear my words, he had never at any time heard my voice; but now he shall depart gifted with that honour, and having heard too from me such things as will never cheer his life. You indeed, oh basest of men! who having the sceptre and the throne which your brother now sways in Thebes, yourself drove away your own father, and forced him to be an exile from the city, and to wear these garments, which you now beholding, weep, when you chance to have come into the same troubles of sorrow with me. But these things are not to be wept by me, but to be endured whilst I live, bearing remembrance of you, a patricide.* For you have made me familiar with this toil, you have driven me out, and by your means I, wandering, beg from others my daily subsistence. And if I had not begotten nurses to myself, these daughters, assuredly I should not have existed, as far as regards your part: but now these preserve me, these my nurses, these men, and not women, to assist in toil. Ye have been born from some other, and not

* Polynices ab Œdipo videtur consulto *φρονέειν* appellare, ut æquali se calamitate a filiis suis adfeci indicaret, qua ipse ignarus Laium patrem suum e vita sustulerit. *Benedict.*

from me. Wherefore the Divinity beholds you, ^bnot at all just now, as he will presently, if these squadrons are moved against the city of Thebe. For it is not given that you should overthrow that city, but first you shall fall distained with blood, and your brother equally. Such curses formerly^c did I emit against you, and now I again summon them to come allies to me, in order that ye may think it fit to reverence parents, and may not treat them with dishonour, if such ye have sprung from a blind father: for these virgins did not do this. Wherefore the curses shall possess your seat and your throne; if Justice, famed of old, jointly preside with Jove over his ancient laws. But do you go to ruin, both spurned and disowned by me, basest of the base, taking with you these curses, which on your head I invoke, never to gain possession of your native land by the spear, and never to return to hollow Argos, but to die by a brother's hand, and to slay him by whom you were driven out. Such curses I imprecate, ^dand I invoke the murky parent gloom of Tartarus to receive you in its mansions; and I invoke these Goddesses,

^b That is, "Fortune will then frown upon you."

^c The Scholiast gives rather a quizzical account of these former curses of Œdipus. His sons had been in the practice, when they sacrificed, of sending him a shoulder, but on one occasion they disappointed the old gentleman of his favourite part, and only sent him a thigh. He was so enraged at them for their *joint* neglect, that he uttered those curses which entailed ruin and death on their heads.

^d There is nothing, even in the curses of Lear, so strong and horrible as this. The expressions on the occasion of the thigh are not handed down to us; but it is to be hoped that they were not quite so bitter as this second and improved edition.

and I invoke Mars, who has inspired you with this dire hatred. And having heard these words, depart, and going, announce both to all the people of Cadmus, and at the same time to your faithful allies, that *Cedipus* has awarded such gifts to his children.

CHO. Polynices, I do not congratulate you on the way you have passed ; and now go back again with all speed.

POL. Woe is me for my journey, and for my ill success ! and woe is me for my associates ! For what an issue of our expedition then have we set out from Argos ? Oh, unhappy me ! such an one as it is neither allowed me to tell to any of my associates, nor to turn them back, but remaining silent, to encounter this fate. Oh sisters ! sprung from the same blood with me, but do not ye, since ye hear our father imprecating these harsh curses, if at least his curses be accomplished, and any return take place to you home, do not ye at least, by the Gods, treat me with dishonour, but lay me in the tomb, and with funeral rites. And praise, which you now carry off from this man for the things in which ye labour, you will gain no less, and in addition, from your ministry to me.

ANT. Polynices, I besecch you in something to obey me.

POL. In what sort of thing, dearest *Antigone* ?—Speak.

ANT. Turn back, as quickly as possible at least, your armament to Argos, and do not destroy both yourself and the city.

POL. But it is not possible. For how could I again lead back the same army, having once trembled ?

ANT. And what need is there, O youth, again to give way to your anger? What gain results to you, having overthrown your native country?

POL. It is base to fly, and that I, the elder, should thus be laughed at by my brother.

ANT. Do you see then how you directly bear to fulfilment his oracles, who predicts to you death by each other's hands?

POL. Yes, he predicts it, but we must not yield.^e

ANT. Woe is me, unhappy woman! But who will dare to follow you, hearing the prophecies of this man, such as he has delivered?

POL. We will not announce what is bad, since it is the part of a good general to speak of success, not failure.

ANT. Thus then, O youth, are these things decreed by you?

POL. Yes, and do not indeed restrain me. But to me this expedition will be a care, though consigned to misfortune and ruin by my father and his Furies. And to you may Jove grant a propitious way, if ye perform these things to me in death; since to me in life, at any rate, you will not again have it in your power. And now let me go,^f and fare ye well, for ye never will more behold me alive.

^e Or, "We (i. e. Eteocles and I) must not be reconciled."

^f It would appear from this expression, that Antigone, in the agony of sisterly love, had thrown her arms around her ill-fated brother, and endeavoured thus to restrain him, when her tears and her prayers were of no avail. The whole scene is exquisitely tender and beautiful, and presents a fine contrast to the unnatural sentiments and stern curses which Œdipus had just before uttered.

ANT. O unhappy me !

POL. Do not mourn for me.

ANT. And who, O brother ! would not groan over you, rushing to evident destruction ?

POL. If it be fated, I shall die.

ANT. Do not you, sure you will not,^s but obey me.

POL. Do not persuade me what is not fitting.

ANT. Unhappy then am I, if I be deprived of you.

POL. These things rest with the Divinity, to take place in this way, or that way. But I pray the Gods that evil may never meet you, for you were unworthy to be in any thing unfortunate.

CHO. These new evils, laden with doom, have come upon me anew from the sightless stranger, if Fate be not working out some remedy. For I cannot say that any award of the Gods is in vain. Time regards, ever regards these things, since again heaping up each day these other ills——The firmament hath thundered, O Jove !

ŒD. ^h O children ! children ! how, if there be here any dweller in the place, would he send hither the all-excellent Theseus ?

^s Such is the only way in which the force of the γῆ, in this place, can properly be given.

^h Œdipus immediately perceives that his hour is come. Early in the play he mentions that he expected such a sign :—

Σημεῖα δ' ἤξουν τᾶνδ' ἡμοῖ παρηγγίλια,

"Ἡ σισυρόν, ἢ βροτὴν τιν' ἢ Διὸς σέλας.

This circumstance is in itself productive of a sublime and almost appalling sensation, and the play proceeds from this point to the catastrophe in a strain of unequalled grandeur and effect.

ANT. But what, father, is the request for which you summon him?

ŒD. This winged thunder of Jove will straightway bear me to the shades; but send with all speed.

CHO. Behold how terribly this mighty bolt, hurled by Jove, is unspeakably crashing along. Terror hath crept along the summits of the hairs of my head. I have quailed in spirit: for the lightning of heaven is again blazing. What issue indeed will it produce? But I fear, for never does it rush from heaven without purpose or without consequences. O mighty firmament! O Jove!

ŒD. Oh my children, the predicted end of life hath come to me, and there is no longer escape from it.

ANT. How do you know it? by what do you conjecture it?

ŒD. I know it well; but let some one, going as quickly as possible, send hither to me the king of the land.

CHO. Oh! oh! Behold how terribly again the 'piercing roar rolls around us. Be merciful, oh divinity, be merciful, if you chance to bear some dark doom to my mother earth, and may I meet with what is propitious, nor having seen a man never to be forgotten, may I somehow reap a bootless favour. Jove, in heaven to thee I speak.

ŒD. Is the man near? Will he yet, my children, find me alive, and possessed of my senses?

¹ Διαιγύριος, "penetrans," by which may either be expressed the reverberation of sound through the sky, or the Chorus may mean that the thunder thrills, if we may so say, through them.

ANT. And what secret trust would you wish to commit to his breast?

ŒD. In return for the favours I have received, to give him the consummation of the favour I promised.

CHOR. Ho, ho, my son, come, come, if at the extremity of the beach you are consecrating the sacrificial altar to Neptune, God of the sea, come: for the stranger deems it right to return to you, and to the city, and to his friends, the just favours he has received. Hasten, rush, oh king!

TH. What common uproar again resounds from you, clearly proceeding from yourselves, and distinctly from the stranger? Has some bolt of Jove, or shower of hail burst ¹upon you? for one may conjecture every thing of this kind, when the God raises the storm.

ŒD. Oh king! you have appeared to my wish, and some God gave you the happy fortune of this coming.

TH. But what new thing, oh son of Laius, has again arisen?

ŒD. This is the crisis ¹of life to me, and I wish to die without deceiving you and this city in what I promised.

TH. On what certain sign of death do you depend?

ŒD. The Gods, themselves their heralds, announce it to me, being false to none of the previously-concerted signs.

¹ *Ἐπιβίασα*—Supplendum *τυγχάνει*.

¹ Or, "My life is verging to its close." The meaning of *βίη* is taken from the turn of the balance.

TH. How sayest thou, old man, that these things are unfolded ?

ŒD. The frequent continuous thunderings, and the many bolts flashing from the hand that is invincible.

TH. You persuade me, for I see you predicting many things, and these not of false report ; and tell me what it is fitting to do ?

ŒD. I will teach you, O son of Ægeus, things which uninjured by age, shall be stored up to this city. I myself, untouched by a guide, will straight-way point out the spot where it behoves me to die. This never tell to any mortal, neither where it is concealed, nor in what place it lies, since it will ever provide you a defence against your neighbours, superior to many shields, and to foreign spears. But the things that are sacred and that are not uttered in words, you yourself shall learn when you come there alone ; since neither would I declare them to any one of these citizens, nor to my children, though I love them. But do you yourself always preserve them, and when you come to the end of life reveal them to the foremost in power alone, and let him ever show them to his successor ; and thus you will inhabit this city unhurt by the men that sprung from the dragon's teeth.^m But many cities, even though one rule them

^m A designation of the Thebans, derived from their fabulous origin. Cadmus, after dispatching a huge snake, sowed its teeth, and from this strange seed produced a still stranger crop, a host of armed men. The crop reaped itself, or, in other words, they gave proof of their origin by immediately shewing their teeth, and falling to and killing one another, till only five were left, who assisted Cadmus in founding Thebes.

well, easily give way to insolence ; for the Gods full well, though late, pay regard when any one, heedless of religion, may betake himself to frenzy ; which do you, O son of Ægeus, be unwilling to suffer. I instruct, however, one who knows such things. But let us now go the spot, for a present impulse of Heaven urges me on, nor yet let us feel awed. Oh, my daughters, this way follow me, for I in turn have appeared a new guide to you, as ye were to your father. Go, and do not touch me, but suffer me myself to find out the sacred tomb where it is fated for me to be ensepulchred beneath this soil. In this way, here in this way advance, for in this way there is leading me on Hermes the conductor,^a and she, the Goddess of the shades.^o O light, rayless to me, formerly somewhere, once on a time, thou wert mine, and now, for the last time, my body touches thee : for now I go to conceal the close of my life in the shades. But, O dearest of friends ! may both you, and this land, and your servants,^p be blessed of heaven, and in your success remember my death, ever prospering.

CHO. ^aIf it be lawful for me to worship with prayers the unseen Goddess, and thee, O Pluto, Pluto, king of those who dwell in night, I beseech you that nei-

^a That is, the conductor of the dead.

^o Proserpine.

^p The Athenian people.

^a " Cur deos inferos adoraturus veniam quasi præfatur ? An quod Pluto κείνῃ τι προσχάς τ' ἵλας (ut ait Stesichorus) non preces ?" *Musgrave.*

ther with pain, nor in a death of grievous suffering, the stranger accomplish his way to the plain of the dead below the earth that encloses all mortals, and to the Stygian mansions. For many and 'undeserved sufferings having come upon you, may the just Divinity again exalt you. O ye Goddesses below the earth, and form of the invincible monster, who, they say, has his lair by the well-polished^a gates, and whom fame ever reports to growl from his den, the unconquerable guardian of Orcus whom, O son of Earth and Tartarus, I implore gently to meet the stranger advancing to the infernal plains of the dead: thee I invoke, thee, who never slumberest.

MESSENGER.

Ye citizens, I may in very brief words express to you that Œdipus is dead: but what was done, neither is there language to relate shortly,^a nor the circumstances, as many as took place there.

* *Μάταια*. Having come vainly, because there was no occasion for them by prior guilt.

* The gates of the infernal regions appear to be called well-polished, or, more literally, polished by many, from the crowds that constantly made their entrance, and scoured them up, though placed in such a dingy atmosphere. We have something similar in Lucretius:—

“ ——— tum, portas propter, athena
Signa manus dexteras obtendunt adtenuari
Sæpe salutantum tactu, præterque meantum.”

LIB. I. 317.

* If so very much took place during the time that the Chorus was singing this stave, we are afraid that one of the unities, to which the Greeks paid such attention, must have been not a little violated.

CHO. For has the wretched man perished?

MISS. Be assured that he has for ever bid farewell to life.

CHO. How? Did the unhappy man die by a doom sent from heaven, and void of pain?

MISS. This already is fit even to excite astonishment. For how indeed he went hence, you too being somewhere present, know, no one of his friends acting as guide, but he himself leading the way to us all. But when he came to the threshold of the steep descent, firm-rooted in earth with brazen steps, he stood in one of the many-dividing ways near the hollow cave, where lie the ever faithful pledges of Theseus and Pirithous.* Standing between which place, and the Thorician rock, and the hollow thorn and the sepulchre of stone, he sat him down. Then he loosed his squalid garments: and next, having called on his daughters, he ordered them from some place to bring the water for the bath, and libations from the running stream. And they, going to the conspicuous hill of the verdant Ceres, performed in a short time these injunctions to their father; and with lavers and with

* Theseus had made a solemn league of friendship with Pirithous on this spot, and agreed to accompany him to the lower regions to assist him in recovering Proserpine, the object of his passionate love, from the clutches of Pluto. The love and the friendship were alike ill-starred. Theseus was separated from his heroic companion by an earthquake, and with difficulty regained the light; but Pirithous was detained, and condemned to eternal darkness and chains.

“ ————— amatores trecentos
Pirithoum cohibent catenas.

HORACE.

robes they decked him out in the way that is ritual. And when he had satisfaction in every thing being done, and there was nothing any longer undone of what he desired, Jove indeed thundered beneath the earth, and the virgins were frozen with horror as they heard it; and falling at the knees of their father, they wept, nor did they cease from beatings of the breast and lengthened groans. But he, as he suddenly heard their bitter cries, folding his hands over them, said, "O my children, there is no longer to you this day a father: for all that was mine has perished, and you no longer shall have the difficult toil of supporting me: grievous it was, I know, my daughters; but yet one word does away with all these troubles: for you enjoyed love from no one more than from me, of whom deprived, you shall now spend happily the remainder of your life." Thus clinging to one another, they all, with sobs, wept. But when they came to the end of their wailings, and no cry arose, silence indeed prevailed; but the voice of some one on a sudden loudly called him, so that all, trembling with terror, instantly raised upright their hairs. For the God oft in various ways summons him;—"Ho you! ho you Œdipus! why linger we to depart? Long since your part is tardy." But he, when he perceived he was summoned by the God, calls on Theseus, the king of the land, to come to him; and when he came, said, "O beloved friend, pledge to my children the former faith of your right hand; and ye, my daughters, to

* "The faith which I have already tried and proved in your protection of me."

him, and solemnly ratify that you will never willingly betray them, but will always perform whatsoever you conceive advantageous to them." And he, without lamentations, promised, like a generous man, with oaths, to perform these things to the stranger. And when he had done this, Œdipus, touching with feeble hands his children, says, "O my daughters, it is necessary that, supporting generous resolution in your minds, you should depart from these places, nor claim to see what it is not lawful to see, nor to hear those speaking who should not be heard.⁷ But depart as quickly as possible, only let king Theseus be present to learn what is done." So much we all heard him utter, and shedding copious tears, and groaning, we departed along with the virgins; and when we had gone away, turning in a short time, we saw the man no longer, indeed, any where present, but the king himself, holding his hand over his brow to shade his eyes, as if some horrible sight of fear had been disclosed, nor what was endurable to look upon.⁸ Afterwards, in a little and in no long time, we see him paying adoration to earth and to Olympus, seat of the Gods, in the same prayer. But by what fate he perished no one of mortals can

⁷ We are afraid this would operate with most women as a strong inducement to disregard the advice.

⁸ The picture to the eye is here admirable, and affords one of the best examples of the author's graphic power. The whole of the description, indeed, is at once interesting and sublime, and has obtained peculiar praises from the highest critical source,—the pen of Longinus.

tell, except Theseus ; for neither did any bolt of the God, winged with lightning, destroy him, nor tempest raised from ocean at that moment ; but it was either some messenger from heaven, or sunless plains of the shades beneath the earth, mercifully opening to receive him. For the man is not to be lamented, nor was he dismissed from life wretched with disease, but if any other of mortals, worthy of admiration. And if I seem to speak, not being in my senses, I would not yield to those to whom I appear deprived of sense.

CHO. But where are his children and the friends who conducted them ?

MESSENGER. They are not far off, for the sounds of mourning not indistinct signify to us that they are approaching hither-ward.

ANT. 'Woe, woe ! alas ! there is not, there is not to us wretched this grief, and no other, to lament the accursed kindred blood of our father, for whom we firmly bore many toils in many places, and in this last shall endure unutterable calamities, seeing and suffering them.

* The Scholiast has here very rashly ventured on a piece of criticism. His words are, τὰ ἰφιῆ; τοῦ δῆμου; οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναγκαῖον. We differ with him *toto calo*. The play ought to have ended with the speech of the messenger, and to have closed, as the interest closes, with the sublime catastrophe there so magnificently described. The whinings of the girls after this could not fail to appear feeble, and to complete this natural disadvantage under which they labour, the poet has contrived to render them most intolerably stupid. Some, however, may be of the pathetic Scholiast's opinion ; and to them we willingly make a present of αἶ, αἶ, φῦ, φῦ, and Co.

CHO. What is it?

ANT. It is not indeed possible to conceive it, my friends.

CHO. Is he gone?

ANT. Yes, as you would feel most desirous he should. For why? whom neither Mars nor ocean overthrew, but the unseen plains, revealed to light, swallowed in a certain mysterious fate. Unhappy woman that I am! for to us has the night of destruction come over our eyes; for how, wandering either to some far foreign land, or over the billows of the deep, shall we gain life's hard-earned subsistence?

ISM. I know not. May bloody Pluto bear me down, to die unhappy along with my aged father; since to me at least, the life to come is not worth living for.

CHO. Oh ye twain, best of children, it is fit to bear that well which comes from heaven, nor do ye too much inflame your grief: your lot is not to be found fault with.

ANT. There was then some desire even of miseries; for that which is by no means pleasant, was pleasant when, at least, I held him in my arms. Oh father! oh dear father! oh thou who art enveloped for ever in darkness beneath the earth, neither in your old age were you ever unbeloved by me, nor shall be.

CHO. He has accomplished then——

ANT. He has accomplished what he wished.

CHO. A thing of what kind?

ANT. He has died in a foreign land, as he desired, and he has a bed beneath the earth, in ever unbroken shade, nor has he left mourning without tears; for ever, oh father, this my weeping eye laments you,

nor know I how it is possible for me, wretched, to banish such great affliction. Alas! you ought not to have died in a foreign land, but thus you have died deserted by me.

ISM. Oh unhappy me! what desolate distressing fate again awaits me and thee, dear sister, thus bereft of a father.

CHO. But since he has happily at least, dear virgins, closed the term of life, cease from this sorrow, for no one is a difficult prey to misfortune.

ANT. Let us haste, loved sister, back.

ISM. That we may do what?

ANT. A desire possesses me——

ISM. What desire?

ANT. To see the sepulchral home——

ISM. Of whom?

ANT. Of our father. Oh, unhappy me!

ISM. But how is this lawful? Do you not see——

ANT. Why do you reprove this?

ISM. And this, how——^b

ANT. Why this so much again——

ISM. He has fallen unburied, and apart from every one.

ANT. Conduct me, and then slay me.

ISM. Woe, woe is me, unhappy! Where, in truth, henceforth shall I, thus desolate and in want, endure my wretched existence?

CHO. Dear maids, fear nothing.

ANT. But where shall I fly?

^b The meaning of these two or three speeches is obviously destroyed by corruption, or rather mutilation, of the text.

CHO. Even before ye have fled from falling into misery.

ANT. I think——

CHO. What, in truth, do you think ?

ANT. I know not how we shall return home.

CHO. Do not then inquire into it. Trouble possesses——

ANT. And formerly did ; since at one time indeed it advances farther, and at another passes all bounds.

CHO. Ye have then obtained for your lot a vast sea [of troubles.]

ANT. Yea, yea.

CHO. I too assent to it.

ANT. Alas ! alas ! where shall we go, O Jove ? for to what hope does the God now, at least, incite us ?

THESEUS.

Cease, virgins, from your dirges, for in those cases where joy at least is stored up in the tomb, we ought not to mourn ; for there would be indignation of heaven.

ANT. O, son of Ægeus ! we fall down before thee.

TH. To grant what boon, ye maids ?

ANT. We wish with our own eyes to behold the tomb of our father.

TH. But it is not lawful to go thither.

ANT. How sayest thou, king, ruler of Athens ?

TH. He forbade me, virgins, that any one of mortals should approach those places, or address the sacred sepulchre which he tenants ; and he said, if I did this, that I should always gloriously possess this land uninjured. These agreements of ours, therefore, Jove

heard, and he that hears every thing, the God of oaths, son of Jove.

ANT. If these things are agreeable to him, they will suffice to us : but send us to Ogygian Thebes, if we may in any way prevent the slaughter coming on our brothers.

TH. I will do this, and every thing at least which I am about to perform advantageous to you, and gratifying to him below the earth, who is just gone : for it does not befit me to weary in this task.

CHO. But cease, nor any longer awake the voice of sorrow ; for these things completely have ratification.

ANTIGONE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANTIGONE.

ISMENE.

CHORUS.

CREON.

MESSENGERS.

HÆMON.

TIRESIAS.

EURYDICE.

ANTIGONE.

ANTIGONE.

O KINDRED form of my own sister Ismene, knowest thou any of the evils descending from *Œdipus*, which *Jove* will not yet accomplish to us in life? for there is nothing either wretched or ruinous, or base and degrading, which I have not beheld in your evils and mine. And now again, what is this proclamation which they say the ruler has just propounded to all the

* The curses of *Œdipus* have now been fulfilled: *Polynices* and *Eteocles* have fallen by each other's hands, and the army of the *Argives* has been routed before the walls of *Thebes*. *Antigone* is not forgetful of the request of *Polynices* at their last interview, and determines, in spite of the edict to the contrary, to bestow the rites of sepulture on her unhappy brother. As the play mainly turns on this circumstance, it is necessary to bear in mind how much importance the ancients attached to the burial of the dead. The constancy of *Antigone's* resolution will thus be explained, the violence of her sisterly affection justified, and even the merit of her generous conduct enhanced.

people of the city? Knowest thou? and hast thou heard aught? or do the injuries of enemies advancing against friends escape your notice?

ISMENE.

To me indeed, Antigone, no tidings of friends, either sweet or sorrowful, have come from the time that we two were bereft of two brothers, dying on the same day by a mutual hand: and since the army of the Argives has disappeared during this night, I know nothing farther, neither being more prosperous nor more afflicted.

ANT. I knew it well; and therefore have I sent for you without the gates of the courts, that you might hear alone.

ISM. But what is it? for you shew you are ^b boiling with some thought.

ANT. For has not Creon honoured one of our brothers with sepulture, and deprived the other of this honour? Eteocles indeed, as they say, acting upon the rights of justice and law, he has entombed beneath the earth, an honoured shade to the Gods below; but the corpse of Polynices, which wretchedly fell, they say it has been proclaimed to the citizens that no one shall enclose in the tomb, nor wail over, but leave it ^c unlamented.

^b *Καλχαίρεον* is properly a word expressive of the purple dye (*καλχη*) bubbling up from the depths of the sea, and is here used in an analogous way, to express the agitated state of the mind.

^c This was the judgment which God denounced against Jehoiakim, king of Judah: "They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother! or, Ah, sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, lord! or, Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an un-"

mented and unburied, a sweet treasure to birds hastening to the delight of the banquet. Such things they say that the good Creon has proclaimed to you and me, for I say even me, and that he is coming hither to herald them clearly forth to those who do not know them, and to bid them consider the matter not as a thing of nought, but whosoever shall do one of those things, that a death by the stoning of the people is decreed him in the city. Thus rests this case to you, and you will quickly shew whether you have been born of generous spirit, or degenerate from the good.

ISM. But what, oh wretched woman! if these things are in this state, could I avail more, doing away with, or confirming the law?

ANT. Consider if you will labour along with me, and assist me in the work.

ISM. In what sort of hazard? Where in intention at all are you?

ANT. If you will raise up along with this hand the dead body.

ISM. For do you design to bury him, interdicted by the state?

ANT. Yes, him who is at all events my brother; and though you wish it not, ⁴ yours: for I will not be found to betray him.

acc," &c. Jer. xxii. 18, 19. The customs and manners of the Greeks were originally drawn from the eastern nations; which accounts for the similitude so observable in Sophocles, and other heathen writers, with some parts of Holy Writ. *Franchlin.*

⁴ That is, "Though you, an unnatural sister, would disown him:" or it may be, more simply, "I will bury him, though you do not wish it."

ISM. Oh audacious woman ! when Creon forbids ?

ANT. But he has no business to put a barrier betwixt me and * mine.

ISM. Ah me ! think, oh sister ! how our father perished in odium and infamy, having, on the detection of his guilt, himself torn out both his eyes with self-destroying hand : then his mother and wife, a double term, mars her life by the suspended cords : and, third, the two wretched brothers, slaying themselves on the same day, wrought their mutual death each by a brother's hand. And now we two, being left alone, consider by how much the worst of all we shall perish, if, in violation of the law, we transgress the decree or power of superiors. But it behoves us, indeed, to reflect on this, that we are by nature women, so as not able to contend against men ; and then, since we are ruled by those more powerful, to submit to these things, and things still more painful than these. I then indeed, asking those below the earth to forgive me, since I am constrained to this, will obey those who walk in 'office ; for to attempt those things beyond our power, implies no wisdom.

ANT. Neither would I request you, nor though you now wished to do it, should you act along with me, at

* This dialogue between Antigone and Ismene exceedingly resembles that between the sisters in the tragedy of *Electra*, by the same author. The sentiments and the characters entirely correspond. Antigone and *Electra* are generous and bold ; Ismene and *Chrysothemis* selfish and pitiful.

† This is a principle of conduct with a great many people besides Ismene, though they may not always be quite so candid as the young lady in confessing it.

least with pleasure to me. But ^s be of such a character as seems good to you ; but I will bury him : it is glorious to me, doing this, to die. I beloved will lie with him, —with him I love, having ^b audaciously done what is holy ; since the time is longer which it is required of me to please those below than those here ; for there I shall ever lie. But if these things seem good to you, do you hold in dishonour those things which are honoured of the Gods.

ISM. I indeed do not hold them in dishonour ; but to act against the will of the citizens I am by nature incapable.

ANT. You indeed may make this pretext, but I will go to raise a tomb for my dearest brother.

ISM. Woe is me ! for you unhappy ! how I fear excessively for you !

ANT. Fear not for me :—direct aright your own fate.

ISM. But do not then at any rate previously disclose this deed to any one, but conceal it in secret, and in like manner will I conceal it.

ANT. Ah me ! speak it out. You will be much

^s Brunck has here made a mistake in deriving *ἴσθι* from *ἴσχυς* scio, instead of *ἴμῃ* sum.

^b “Wickedly” were perhaps a better word, did it not make the expression rather too contradictory. Antigone confesses her violation of the law, but justifies the means by the end. This is what is implied in *ἁγία πικρὴν ψεύδω*, to which we have something similar in the phrase of “a pious fraud,” as well as an illustration of the principle in the case of the old woman who stole a pair of spectacles that she might read the Bible.

more hateful silent, if you do not proclaim these things to all.

ISM. You have a warm spirit in a chilling enterprise.

ANT. But I know that I please those whom it most befits me to please.

ISM. If at least you shall be able : but you long for what is impossible.

ANT. Therefore, when I have not power, I shall cease.

ISM. But it is not fitting to pursue at all what is impossible.

ANT. If you will speak thus, you will be hated indeed by me, and will justly be hated, in addition, by him that is dead. But suffer me, and my rash counsels, to endure this danger ; for I shall not suffer any thing so great, so as not to die gloriously.

ISM. But, if it thus seem good to you, go ; and know this, that you go indeed unwise, but to your friends right a friend.

CHORUS.

¹ Beam of the sun, that hath shone the fairest light of all before to Thebes, with her seven gates, thou hast at length gleamed forth, oh eye of golden day ! peering

¹ Musgrave suggests that the poetry of this beautiful passage will be heightened by supposing the chorus to deliver their address to the sun immediately after his rise. The probability of it is confirmed by the splendour and abruptness of the apostrophe, and still more by the moment being marked when the rays of the luminary begin to stream over the fountains of Dirce.

above the channels of Dirce's streams, having driven in rapid flight with keener-urged rein the ^k chief of the silver shield, who came from Argos with all his panoply,—the chief, who, incited against our land by the dubious contentions of Polynices, shrilly screaming, like an eagle descending to earth, hovered over us, covered with the wing of white snow, with many a shield, and with plumed helms. And having taken his stand above our palaces, ravening all around with bloody spears the outlets of the seven gates, he departed before that he had gorged his jaws with our blood, and patchy flame had wrapt the coronet of our towers: such a din of battle was raised in his rear, no easy conquest to the opposing dragon. For Jove detests the vaunts of a haughty tongue, and seeing them rushing on in a mighty stream, with the clangour of gold, and in the pride of armour, he dashes down with the volleyed flame, him, who was already hastening to ring forth the shout of victory on the summits of the battlements. And ^lthe bearer of the fire fell shattered with rebound on earth, he who then raging with frantic impulse, blew upon us with the blasts of most hateful winds. And in a different quarter a different fortune indeed prevailed, and

^k Adrastus, the king of Argos, and leader of the vanquished army on this occasion.

^l Capaneus, who threatened to give Thebes to the flames, and who was struck down by a thunderbolt while he attempted to scale the walls. There are magnificent descriptions of his fate in the Seven Chiefs against Thebes, of Æschylus, and in that most beautiful of plays, the Phœnissæ of Euripides.

mighty Mars (leading the right wing) and thickening the fray, directed other evils against others. For seven leaders, marshalled against seven gates, equal against equal foes, left to Jove, the "God of trophies, their all-brazen arms, except the accursed two who sprung from one father and one mother, having raised against themselves their equally victorious spears, both shared the lot of a mutual death. "But change the strain, for high-renowned Victory hath come with joys to compensate Thebe, the mistress of many a car. Now indeed it is fitting to forget these wars,* and let us approach all the temples of the Gods with dances that last through the live-long night; and let Bacchus, rousing Thebes, begin the revelry. But cease, for here Creon, son of Menœceus, the new king of this land, comes, upon these new casualties of Heaven, revolving some anxious thought, since he hath announced this assembled conference of senators, sending for them by common proclamation.

CREON.

Ye men, the Gods have again established the safety of the city, having shaken it with many a wave: but I have sent for you by messengers to come apart from

* Or, "Jove that turns the battle."

* Ἄλλ᾽, thus used, always implies an ellipsis, and I have taken the liberty, both here and a few lines below, of supplying it.

* I am not sure but the construction of this passage proposed by Erfurdt, is better than Brunck's:—"τῶν νῦν non videtur ad πολέμων pertinere: nam et languidum foret nec dicitur ἐκδίωθαι λεημοσίαν, sed θύειν. Quare iungenda censeo verba sic, ἐκ πολέμων, post bellum, θύειν λεημοσίαν τῶν νῦν, obliviscami præsentia, i. e. funera fratrum."

all, both knowing well that you ever revered the might of the throne of Laius, and again, when Œdipus directed the state, and when he perished, that you remained with constant spirits towards his sons. Since therefore they have perished on the same day by a mutual death, striking and stricken in suicidal guilt, I hold all the power and the throne by affinity of blood with the dead. But it is impossible to ascertain the soul, and spirit, and judgment of every man, before he shall be seen tried by office,^p and the administration of the laws. For whosoever, ruling a whole state, applies not to the best counsels, but from some fear restrains his tongue, appears to me, both now and formerly, to be the basest of men; and whosoever esteems his friend more than his country, him I hold in no account. For I, let Jupiter who ever beholds all things know it, would neither be silent, seeing ruin, in place of safety, coming upon the citizens, nor would I ever make a man who was hostile to my country, a friend to myself, knowing this, that it is our country which preserves us, and that, sailing in her unfounded, we make friends.^q By such laws as these I will exalt this city, and now I have proclaimed to the citizens things in unison with these concerning

^p Ἀρχὴ ἀνδρῶν δουρεῖ, from which Creon borrows his maxim, was an old proverbial saying, attributed originally to Bias of Priene, one of the seven sages of Greece.

^q Creon, though an absolute monarch, dreads the unpopularity of his sacrilegious edict. He therefore endeavours, by a great many plausible expressions of patriotism and integrity, to do away with unfavourable impressions in the minds of the citizens, and to extort from their fear an approbation of his conduct.

the sons of Œdipus. Eteocles indeed, who fell fighting for this city, bearing the palm in every thing with his spear, I have commanded them both to enshroud in the tomb, and to consecrate to him all that is paid to the gallant dead below. But him again, the brother of this man, I mean Polynices, who, returning an exile, wished to consume utterly with flames the country of his fathers, and Gods of that country, and wished to glut himself with kindred blood, and having enslaved the citizens, to lead them away,—him it has been proclaimed to this city, that neither any one shall lay with rites in the tomb, nor wail over him, but leave him unburied, and behold his body devoured and mangled by birds and dogs. Such is my will; and never from me at least shall the wicked have honour in preference to the just: but whosoever displays good will to this city, shall, both in life and death, be equally honoured by me.

CHO. The same things please me as please thee, Creon, son of Menœceus, concerning the one who was an enemy, and the other, who was a friend to this city: but it resides in you to use any law, both concerning the dead, and concerning us, as many as live.*

* *Ἐοὶ* non ad ἀγίον, sed ad τὰ αὐτὰ refertur, subaudito alio pronomine *με*. Constructio est, ἀγίον *με* τὰ αὐτὰ *οὐν*. Brunnk.

* The Chorus are as complying and servile as Creon could desire. Later in the play they rather change their tone; but it is a pity that they whose office it was to deliver the lessons of morality and virtue, should have at all been represented out of their natural character. It has been suggested by some, that the poet meant to gratify his countrymen by placing their enemies, the Thebans, in the contemptible

CR. See that ye be now guardians of the edict.

CHO. Impose this on some younger one to bear.

CR. But there are watchers of the corpse, at least, prepared.

CHO. What farther than this in truth would you yet enjoin?

CR. Not to give way to those that disobey this.

CHO. There is no one so foolish as to desire to die.

CR. And in truth this at least is the reward; but gain has oft, by means of hope, destroyed men.

MESSENGER.

‘O king, I will not indeed say that I come panting with speed, having lifted up a nimble foot, for I had many resistances of thought, wheeling myself round in the way to return, and my mind holding a dialogue with me, said many things. “Unhappy man, why go you where coming you shall suffer punishment? Yet, wretch, do you stop? If Creon shall learn these things from some other man, how in truth shall you not smart for it?” Revolving such thoughts, I made out my journey tardy with delay, and thus a short way is made long. In the end, however, the resolution prevailed to come

light of slaves. If this reason be true, we can only regret that he was induced, by such an unworthy motive, to deform one of his finest productions by a disagreeable inconsistency.

‘This Ἀγγιλος, or Φύλαξ, (for editors disagree about his designation,) is a very prating and impertinent sort of person. Few tyrants would have contented themselves with saying, *ὡς λάλημα δῆλοι ἐπὶ συνὸς αἶ*, but would have been much more likely to have chopped off his head for his pains.

hither ; and to you, though I say nothing agreeable, I will nevertheless speak, for I come possessed by the hope that I shall suffer nothing else except what is fated.

CR. But what is it from which you feel this disheartening fear ?

MESS. "I wish first to tell what regards myself ; for I neither did the deed, nor did I see who was the perpetrator, nor ought I justly to fall into any mischief.

CR. You scrutinize at least the matter well, and fence it all round ; but you seem about to signify some news.

MESS. For dangers create great fear.

CR. Will you not at length speak, and then depart freed.

MESS. And now indeed I tell you. Some one has gone, having just buried the dead body, and having sprinkled the dry dust over the skin, and having performed the proper rites.

CR. What say you ? what mortal dared this ?

MESS. I know not ; for there was neither stroke of axe nor any rubbish cast forth by the spade, but the

* The commentators quote a parallel speech to this from the Eunuchus of Terence :—

" Here, primum te arbitrari id quod res est velim :

Quicquid hujus factum est, culpa non factum est mea."

There is nothing, after all, so very wonderful in this discovery, as it is probable that scarcely any suspected person ever began to tell his story without a similar preface.

earth was firm and the soil unbroken, nor did it bear the track of wheels, but the worker was one who left no trace.* And when the first watchman of the day discovers it to us, painful wonder was felt by all. For he indeed had disappeared, yet not enclosed in a tomb, but a slight covering of dust was over him, as if bestowed by some one avoiding the pollution;† and there appeared no marks of a wild beast or dog coming and tearing him. Then revilings were uttered against each other, watchman charging his fellow, and it would have ended in blows, nor was there any one to prevent them; for each individual was the perpetrator, and no one was proved, but the knowledge escaped us. And we were ready ‡ to lift masses of red-hot iron in our hands, and to pass through fire, and to appeal to the Gods by oath, that we neither did it, nor were conscious to any one who devised or

* The messenger wishes to clear himself by insinuating that it was not any mortal power that had performed these operations. The Chorus, when he concludes, express the same opinion: but Creon was not to be so easily deceived.

† The person who passed a dead body without bestowing a handful of dust on it, was held by the ancient superstition to be (*imyas*) polluted. Archytas, in the well-known ode of Horace, enjoins the mariner to observe the pious rite:—

*Quauquam festinas, non est mora longa, licebit
Injecto ter pulvere, curras.*

‡ This is an early allusion to the use of the ordeals afterwards so prevalent in Europe during the dark ages. There are many miraculous escapes from both fire and water detailed in the monkish histories of our own country.

executed the deed. In the end, when there was nothing gained by our inquiries, some one speaks, who made us all bend our heads to earth through fear; for we knew not how to object, nor how doing it we should prosper: and his words were that the deed should be reported to you, and not concealed. This proposal prevailed; and the lot seizes on me, unhappy, to gain this prize; and I am present, I know, unwilling and unwelcome, for no one loves the bearer of evil tidings.

CHO. My mind, O king, is from long since deliberating whether this deed be wrought by heaven.

CR. Stay your words before you fill me with anger, lest you be discovered at the same time a fool and a dotard: for you say what is intolerable, saying that the gods have care concerning this corpse. Whether, highly honouring him as a benefactor, have they buried him who came to set on fire their pillared temples, and to destroy their land and laws? or do you see the Gods honouring the wicked? It is not so; but the citizens, bearing these things ill, even formerly murmured against me, secretly shaking the head, nor did they stoop the crest, as they ought, beneath the yoke, so as to submit to me. I well know that these men, induced by bribes from them, have done this. For no such evil institution as money has arisen to men. * It lays waste cities; it drives away men from their homes; it se-

* " ————— Diffidit urbium

Portas vir Macedo, et subruit æmulos

Reges muneribus."

HOM. III. 16.

duces and perverts the honest inclinations of mortals to turn to base actions; and it has taught men to learn villainy, and to know the impiety of every deed. But as many as for hire have done this, have in time wrought out their fate, so as to suffer punishment; and if Jove still has reverence from me,^b know this well, and under an oath I say it to you, if you do not, discovering him who with his own hand made the tomb, produce him to my eyes, death alone shall not suffice for you, before that, hung up alive, ye make manifest this insult, in order that knowing whence gain is to be drawn, you may for the future seize it, and may learn that it is not fitting to wish to make profit from every thing; for by unjust gain you will see more ruined than preserved.

MESS. Will you grant me to say something, or, turning, shall I thus depart?

CR. Do you not know even now how disagreeably you speak?

MESS. Are you pained in the ears or in the mind?

CR. Why? do you explore my grief where it lies?

MESS. He who did it pains the mind, and I the ears.

CR. Alas me! how plainly you are by nature nothing but talk.

MESS. I am not therefore the person who did this deed.

CR. Yes, and for money too betraying your life.

MESS. Alas! it is hard that to whom at least there are suspicions, his suspicions should be false.

^b The Scholiast explains this, *εἰ τιμῶ καὶ σέβω τὸν Δία, καὶ μὴ ἰπποκῶ αὐτόν.*

Ca. Talk big now about suspicion : but if ye do not shew to me who did this, ye will confess that wicked gain works ruin.

Mess. But may he by all means indeed be discovered : but be he taken or not, for fortune will decide this, it is not likely you shall see me coming hither again. And now, preserved beyond my expectation and opinion, I owe many thanks to the Gods.

CHORUS.

Many things are wily* and nothing is more wily than man. "He even sails beyond the sea, when whitened into foam with the wintry blasts, passing over the billows that roar around ; and the supreme of divinities immortal, undecaying Earth, he furrows, his ploughs circling from year to year, turning up her soil with the offspring of the steed.* And ensnaring the brood of light-minded† birds he bears them away as his prey, and

* Brunck renders *δυνα*, mirabilia ; Musgrave, much more correctly, astuta, solertia.

† *Τούτο* is by some construed *κατὰ τοῦτο*, itaque ; I have taken it as agreeing with *γίνος*—*τοῦτο τὸ γίνος τῶν ἀνθρώπων*. This however, is mere matter of choice, as both the modes are equally unobjectionable.

‡ I cannot resist giving my readers this sentence from the translation of Adams : " He traverses the hoary main in stormy winds, by the rattling tumours of swollen sails, and pierces the supreme incorruptible land of the immortal Gods, year after year returning to plough it with horse-kind." p. 189.

§ *κουφερίων*. Libri omnes *κουφερίων* mendose. Brunck. In spite of of this authoritative judgment we are inclined to think the "*libri omnes*" are correct. Wakefield approves of *κουφερίων* in his notes to Lucretius VI. 743. and renders it, "*celeriter navigantium*," a meaning much more applicable to the passage, and consistent with the general

the tribes of the monsters of the wild, and the marine-race of the deep in the inwoven meshes of his nets, all-inventive man; and he masters by his devices the tenant of the chase, the wild beast that ranges the mountain, and by and by he shall bring under the neck-encircling yoke, the shaggy-maned horse, and the untameable mountain bull. And he hath taught himself language and ^{lofty} wisdom, and the customs of civic law, and to avoid the cold and stormy arrows of uncomfortable frosts. Finding a way through every thing, he comes to nothing that is to be without resource. Of the grave alone he shall not introduce escape; but yet he hath devised remedies against baffling disease. Having beyond belief, a certain inventive skill of art, he at one time advances to evil and at another time to good. Observing the laws of the land, and the plighted justice of Heaven, he is high in the state, but an outcast from the state is he, with whomsoever that which is not honourable resides by reason of audacity; neither may he dwell with me, nor have sentiments like mine who acts thus——

spirit of the Chorus. An epithet indicative of the speed of the birds heightens the difficulty which man's power has to overcome, and we find in the other instances that the poet has made a most judicious choice of expressions with a view to this effect.

* I have followed Hesychius in the explanation of ἀνήμεν as simply meaning ὑψηλόν, μετίωρον. Brunck has it, "sublimum rerum scientiam," which he copies from the περί των μετίωρων φιλοσοφίας of the Scholiast. Erfurdt and Hermann understand it as expressive of the speed of thought: but Benedict disagrees with them for the following reason: "Sensus sublimes docendo quidem instillari possunt humanæ menti, non autem cogitationum celeritas, quæ major sive minor ex indole cujusque naturali dependet."

X a perhaps better "J. feelings of social life"

I am in doubt at this miraculous prodigy! How knowing her shall I deny this to be the maiden Antigone? O wretched woman, and sprung from a wretched father, Oedipus, what at all means this? Sure they do not lead you, at least, disobeying the mandates of the king, and having seized you in the frantic attempt?

Mess. This is she that has wrought the deed. Her we found employed in the burial:—but where is Creon?

Cho. Returning from his palace; he is passing out to meet the opportunity.⁷

Cr. What is it? What chance thus coinciding^k has happened?

Mess. O king, nothing is to be disavowed by mortals, for later opinion gives the lie to the judgment; since I would confidently have maintained, that I would have been slow of ever returning hither, on account of your threats,^l by which I was then endangered. But, for the joy which is without and beyond the hopes resembles in magnitude no other pleasure, I come, though pledged to the contrary by oaths, bringing this virgin, who was detected adorning the tomb. The lot here was not shaken, but this is my prize,^k none other's. And now, O king, taking her as you please, yourself question and

^k "What has happened so opportunely commensurate, or coincident with my arrival?"

^l τῷς σάλις ἀπειλαῖς, propter minas tuas. Vide ad CEd. Col. 1280. *Musgrave*.

^k All lucky and unexpected gain was ascribed to the kindness of the god Hermes, and the word *ἑμαίον* refers to this attribute, and is derived from his name.

convict her; but I freed am justly entitled to get rid of these evils.

CR. In what way do you bring her? whence taking her?

MESS. She was burying the man: you know all.

CR. Do you both understand and correctly deliver what you tell?

MESS. Having at least seen her in the act of burying the dead body which you interdicted. Do I relate these things clearly and plainly?

CR. And how was she seen and found taken in the act?

MESS. The circumstance was of this nature:—For when we came, threatened with these dreadful torments by you, having swept away all the dust which covered the corpse, and having well stript the clammy body, we took our seat to the windward of the top of the hill, having avoided the stench from the body lest it should reach us,¹ each keenly rousing his fellow with bitter reproaches if any one should be sparing of this toil. These things continued for so long a time until the brilliant orb of the sun took its place in the middle of the firmament, and the heat was burning; and then suddenly a whirlwind having raised its furious impulse from the ground, pest of the sky, fills the plain, smiting all the foliage of the woodlands; and the mighty air was filled; and having closed our eyes we endured the heaven-sent plague. And this having departed in length of time, the maiden is seen in view, and she is wailing

¹ Constructio est; *πεφυγότες ὁσμήν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μὴ βάλοι*, fugientes odorem ejus, ne nos feriret. *Musgrave.*

forth the bitter note of the plaintive bird, like when it beholds the bed of its empty nest deprived of its young. Thus also she, when she beholds the dead body bare, burst forth into strains of grief, and baneful curses did she imprecate on those who wrought the deed, and straightway from the well-fashioned brazen urn high-raised aloft with thrice-poured libations she crowns the dead. And we seeing it rushed and immediately seized her, not in the least appalled; and we accused her both of the former and the present doings, and denial of none of them was attempted. But this to me at least is at the same time pleasing and painful: for to escape from evils myself is most pleasing, but to bring friends into misfortune is painful. But it appertains to me by nature to consider all these things less important than my own safety.

CR. You, you bending your head to the ground, do you confess or do you deny having done this?

ANT. I both confess I did it, and I do not deny that I did not.

CR. "You may take yourself off where you please, free from the heavy charge. But do you tell me not at length, but briefly, did you know the proclamation forbidding this?

ANT. I knew it. And why should I not? for it was plain?

CR. And in truth have you dared to transgress these laws?

" Addressing the Messenger.

" Addressing Antigone.

ANT. ° For it was not Jove who proclaimed this to me, nor Justice, that dwells with the gods below the earth, who established these laws among men; nor did I think your proclamations had so much power, so as being a ^pmortal to transcend the unwritten and immoveable laws of the Gods. For not now, at least, or of yesterday, but eternally they live, and no one knows from what time they had their being. I was not going through fear of the spirit of any man to pay the penalty of their violation to the Gods. For I knew I must die, (and why not?) even though you had not proclaimed it, and if I die before my day I account it gain; for whosoever lives like me in many sorrows, how does not he by death obtain ^aadvantage? Thus to me, at least, to meet with this fate, the sorrow is nothing: but if I had suffered him who was born of my mother to lie in death an unburied corpse, in that case I would have sorrowed; in this I sorrow not. But if I seem to you now to happen to do what is foolish, I merely incur the imputation of folly from a fool.

° This speech of Antigone contains a fine expression of high-toned feeling and virtuous resolution. Nothing can surpass the sublimity with which she alludes to the power of principle, and eternity of duration in the laws of heaven; and the touching manner in which she consoles herself for her untimely doom, is the noblest picture of devoted heroism triumphing over nature and the weakness of woman.

° This may either refer, as I have taken it, to Creon, or to Antigone herself: "so as being a mortal I should venture to transgress these laws." There is this objection, however, to the latter mode, that *ὑπερτίχειν* does not so properly mean, violare as superare, vincere. Vide Benedict. Obs. 117.

° Τοῦ ζῆνι δὲ λυπρῶς κρῖσσει ἔστι κατὰ τὴν.

EURIP. TROAD. v. 632.

CHO. The spirit of the daughter shews itself stern from a stern father, and she knows not to yield to misfortune.

CR. But know that too stern spirits bend the most; and you will most frequently see the hardest steel, heated in the fire till brittle, shivered and broken; and I have known high-mettled horses disciplined by a small bit; for it is not right for him to have proud thoughts whosoever is the slave of others. She indeed then first learned to be guilty of insolence, transgressing the ordained laws; and this, when she had done it, is the second insult, to glory in such deeds, and to laugh having done them. Either indeed I am not a man, but she a man, if this victory shall accrue to her without hurt. But whether she be sprung from my sister, or one more near of blood than all beneath the protection of our household 'god, she and her sister shall not escape the most wretched fate; for I charge her equally with having planned the measures respecting this burial. And summon her; for just now I saw her within raving, not possessed of her senses; and the mind of

* The meaning of the phrase τοῦ πατρὸς Ζηνὸς Ἐκείνου can only be expressed, as the reader will easily perceive, by a periphrasis. The altar of Hercæan Jove stood in the court of every house, and he was worshipped, as his name imports, in the light of its guardian and defender.

* κλεπίς. Conjungo cum πρόσθεν ἡγήσθαι, ut constructio sit: ὁ δὲ θυμὸς τῶν ἐν σκότει μὲν ὀρθῶς τεχνούμενων, φίλῃ πρόσθεν κλεπίως ἡγήσθαι. "Mens autem eorum, qui in tenebris pravi aliquid moliantur, solet prius malefica convinci, i. e. malificii convinci." *Musgrave*. "Mens eorum, qui aliquid sceleris clam moliantur, quum aliqui sit illus occultatrix, solet tamen prius deprehendi." *H. Stephanus*. This latter explanation is obscure per obscurius with a vengeance.

those who unjustly devise any thing in the dark, is first wont to be detected in its fraud. I indeed at least hate when any one, discovered in guilt, may then wish to gloss it over.

ANT. Do you wish any thing more than taking me to put me to death?

CR. I indeed wish nothing more. Having this I have all.

ANT. Why in truth do you delay? since to me none of your words are pleasing, nor ever could be made pleasing; and in like manner also, to you mine are naturally displeasing. And yet whence could I have gained a glory of higher renown, than by laying my own brother in the tomb? It would be said that this was approved of by all these, did not fear seal their tongues. But regal power is fortunate in many other things, and in this that it is allowed to say and to do what it pleases.

CR. You alone of these Cadmeans view it in this light.

ANT. These also view it in the same light, but for you they close the lips.

CR. And are not you ashamed if you have sentiments different from theirs?

ANT. No, for it is nothing shameful to revere those who sprung from the same womb.

CR. Was not he also your brother who fell on the opposite side?

ANT. 'My brother sprung from one mother and the same father.

* " *He was.* The original is, 'he was my brother by the same father, and by the same mother.'—The Greek writers, though generally con-

CR. How in truth do you award the other an honour that is impious to him?

ANT. The dead below the earth will not testify this.

CR. If you honour him equally with the impious.

ANT. For not in aught a slave, but my brother he fell.

CR. Laying waste at least this land, but the other resisting in its defence.

ANT. Still the grave at least desires equal laws.

CR. But not the good to obtain an equal share with the bad.

ANT. Who knows if these things are held holy below?

CR. Never at all is the enemy, not even in death, a friend."

ANT. I have been formed by nature not to join in hatred, but to join in love.

CR. Going now below, if you must love, love them; but while I live, a woman shall not rule.

cise, are sometimes very prolix, as in the passage before us, where the sentiment takes up a whole line in the original, and is better expressed in these two words of the translation." *Franchlin*. This notable person, since he had not the taste to perceive the elegance of the original, may make himself as happy as he pleases with his two monosyllables. After having the presumption to think himself qualified to improve upon Sophocles, we cannot help suggesting that he might have devised something much more sublime than the subject of his self-congratulatory comment, the boasted *he was*.

* Euripides, following a much more natural and amiable sentiment than this expressed by Creon, makes Polynices with his last breath speak kindly of his brother.

Φίλος γὰρ ἑχθρὸς ἐγένετ', ἀλλ' ὅμως Φίλος.

PHŒNISSE, 1445.

CHO. And in truth before the gates here comes Ismene, letting fall the tears of a sister's love, and the cloud on her brow bedewing her beauteous face mars the glow of her cheek.

CR. But you, who in my house, like a viper, stealing on without my notice, sucked my blood, and I was not aware that I nursed two fiends and traitors to subvert my throne, come, tell me, do you too confess that you shared in this burial, or do you deny the knowledge of it?

ISMENE.

I did the deed, *if she also says so, and I participate in and bear the blame.

ANT. But justice will not permit you to do this, since you neither were willing, nor did I make you my partner.

ISM. But in your evils I am not ashamed to make myself a fellow-voyager of your sufferings.

ANT. Whose deed it is, Hades, and those below the earth, are conscious: but I do not love a friend that loves with words.

ISM. Do not, sister, deprive me of the honour of dying with you, and of paying the rites to the dead.

ANT. Do not you die along with me, nor make yours what you did not touch. I will suffice to die.

ISM. And what life is dear to me, bereft of you?

* Ismene, whose conduct and sentiments we have always hitherto found disgusting, continues to appear here in a still more unfavourable light. She would fain take the seeming credit of generosity, and yet at the very first moment, she insinuates her innocence, or at least extorts from Antigone, by her saving clause, an acknowledgment to this effect.

ANT. Ask Creon ; for you court him.

ISM. Why do you pain me with this, being yourself nothing benefited by it ?

ANT. Yet I am grieved, in truth, though I deride you.

ISM. In what else could I now benefit you ?

ANT. Preserve yourself : I do not grudge your escape.

ISM. Woe is me, unhappy ! And do I fail to share your fate ?

ANT. For you indeed chose to live, but I to die.

ISM. But not at least without my warning being addressed.

ANT. You indeed did well : but to these I appeared to be wise.

ISM. And, in truth, the guilt is equal to us.

ANT. Be confident : you indeed live, but my soul has long since died, so as to aid the dead.

CR. I say, as to these two virgins, that the one has just appeared mad, and the other from the time she was first born.

ISM. For never, O king, does the mind which may have originally sprung, remain the same to those in misfortune, but is changed.

CR. To you, at any rate, it did, when you chose to work evil with the evil.

γ The Scholiast makes *ταῖς* refer either to Antigone's own sentiments, or to law and justice. There are fifty other things that would do quite as well ; for, to tell the truth, the noun to be supplied is not sufficiently obvious.

ISM. For how is life to be endured by me alone, without her?

CR. But do not say *her*, for she is no longer.

ISM. But will you kill the bride of your own son?

CR. For the furrows of other women may be ploughed.

ISM. Not so, at least, as the union existed between him and her.

CR. I hate bad wives for my sons.

ISM. O dearest Hæmon! how your father dishonours you.

CR. You at least give me too much trouble, both you, and the marriage you talk of.

ISM. For will you deprive your own son of her?

CR. The grave was destined to put a stop to this marriage.

ISM. It is decreed, it would appear, that she shall die.

CR. And so it is for you too, and for me.* Make no more delay,* but conduct her, ye slaves, within, and from this time it is fitting that these women

* This is the Scholiast's interpretation, and it appears the most natural construction that can be put upon the words. Brunck takes it differently: "Ita mihi tibiue videtur;" thus making what was conditional in the first instance, direct in the second. Erfurdt has it not much better: "Et tibi et mihi decretum est, i. e. recte conjicis Antigone supplicium a me constitui."

* *Τέλος* is governed by *ποιῶντι* or *ἄγειν*, or some such word understood. Musgrave very well remarks, that there is no more fitting occasion for an ellipsis than when the haste of an angry man is to be painted.

should not be left at liberty, for even the bold fly, when they already see the close of life near.

CHO. ^b Blessed of heaven are they, to whom there is a being that hath not tasted of misfortune; for to whomsoever their house may be shaken with vengeance from Heaven, nought of visitation is wanting, advancing through the long line of posterity; like as when the billow of the ocean brine, (when darkness beneath the surface of the sea sweeps along on the blasts of Thrace,) rolls from the bottom of the deep the black and storm-tost sand, and the wave-lashed shores resound with the roar. I see the ancient sufferings of the house of Labdacus falling on the sufferings of the dead; nor does one generation quit the race, but some one of the Gods keeps overthrowing it, nor has it a moment's release. For now a light was spread above the last root in the house of *Œdipus*, and then again the bloody sickle of the infernal powers sweeps it away, and frenzy of words, and the fury of the breast. O Jove! what mortal shall, by transcending, enthral thy power, which neither the sleep which leads the universe to decay, ever seizes, nor the unwearied months of the Gods? Undecaying through time, enthroned in might, thou dwellest mid the effulgent blaze of heaven! For the future, and the instant, and the past, this law will suffice: nothing

^b This chorus is enriched with some of the most sublime imagery and conception to be met with in any poet. The lines, in particular, which celebrate the power of Jupiter, are grand beyond expression.

“ Atone for, or pay the reckoning of the race.”

comes to the life of mortals far removed at least from calamity. For deceitful hope is a joy to many, and to many the beguilements of light-minded love; but ruin advances on man, all-ignorant, before that he touch his foot with the warm fire. In wisdom hath an illustrious saying been by some one revealed: That evil on a time appears good to him, whose mind the God hurries on to judgment, and that he lives for a brief space apart from its visitation.

But here is Hæmon, the youngest by birth of your children. Does he come, lamenting the fate of his betrothed bride Antigone, grieving at being defrauded of the nuptials?

CR. We shall soon know better than prophets. O my son! having then heard the ratified decree against your bride, do you come, raging against your father? or are we, in whatever way acting, dear to you?

HÆMON.

Father, I am thine; and you, having good counsels for me, which I will follow, direct me aright. For no marriage will justly be considered greater with me than you, while guiding me well.

CR. For thus, O my son, it is fitting to feel in your breast that every thing takes its place behind the judgment of a father; for on account of this men pray that, begetting children, they may have them obedient in their house, in order that they may both repay an enemy^d with evil, and honour a friend equally with their

^d There is a strong resemblance in this to the sentiments, not to say the language, of the Psalmist: "Like as arrows in the hand of

father. But whosoever begets useless children, what would you say that he did else than engender toils to himself, and much laughter to his enemies. Do not you now, my son, for the sake of a woman, ever drive away your senses by pleasure, knowing that this is a chilling embrace, a bad wife, the partner of your bed at home. For what worse ulcer could there be than a false friend? But, spurning her as an enemy, suffer this virgin to marry some one in the shades.* For since I have clearly discovered her alone of all the city acting with disobedience, I will not prove myself false to my country, but will put her to death. Let her therefore invoke Jove, the God of kindred; for if I rear those who are my natural kin disorderly, much more shall I thus rear those who are not connected with me; for whosoever is a good man in his own family, will also be shewn to be just in the state; but whosoever acts with violence in transgressing the laws, or thinks to command those in power, it is impossible that he should meet with praise from me. But whom the city may appoint, him it is proper to obey in small things or in great, just or unjust; and this man I am confident would rule well and would be willing to be well ruled, and in the tempest of the spear would remain at his post a just and brave companion in arms. There is no greater bane than anarchy; it destroys cities, lays

the giant, even so are young children: happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate." Ps. cxxvii. 5, 6.

* Creon, it appears, had not been informed that neither "marrying nor giving in marriage" went on there.

houses low, and in the combat of the spear scatters the rout : but discipline preserves the most of those who are under rule. There must thus be aid given to those that govern, and we must by no means yield to a woman ; for it were better, if necessary, to be vanquished by a man, and we would not be called inferior to women.

CHO. To us indeed, if we have not suffered the depredations of time, you seem to speak wisely concerning what you speak.

HÆ. Father, the Gods implant wisdom in man, the highest of all possessions as many as exist. But I should neither be able nor know to express that you do not say these things aright. ' For another indeed it might be proper. For your interest, then, I have been accustomed to consider every thing that any one says or does, or has to blame : for your eye terrifies a common citizen from using those words which you would not be pleased to hear ; but I, in the shade, can hear them, in what way the city mourns for this virgin ; how she, the most undeservedly of all women, perishes by the most wretched death, after most glorious deeds ; she who did not suffer her own brother, having fallen in the slaughter unburied, to be destroyed by ravening

f Such is the interpretation of Heath : " Fieri quidem id possit ab alio (qui filius non sit tuus) et quidem non indecore " Hæmon delicately insinuates that the conduct of his father is objectionable, but will not allow himself, from filial respect, to give vent to unbecoming censure. Brunck's translation bears about as much relation to the original, as it does to sense and intelligibility : " Est tamen ut alius etiam vera dicere queat."

dogs, nor by any bird. Is not she worthy of gaining golden honour? Such a hidden report makes its way on in silence. To me, father, there is no possession more honourable than your prosperity; for what is a greater ornament of glory to children than a father flourishing? or what to a father than his children? Do not now bear this one disposition of mind only in yourself, that what you say, and nothing else, is right; for whosoever thinks that he himself alone has wisdom, or a tongue, or a soul, such as no other, these men, when laid open, have been seen to be empty. But it is no disgrace to a man, even though he be wise, to learn many things, and not to strive too much against others. You see by the channels of winter streams how as many trees as yield preserve their boughs; but those that resist perish with the very root. And in like manner, whoever managing a ship, having drawn firm the sail-rope, gives no way; he upsetting her, navigates for the future with benches turned upside down. But yield from your anger, and grant a change. For if there is any judgment with me too, though a younger man, I say, that it is far the best for a man to be by nature full of knowledge; but if not, for it is not wont to incline in this way, it is also honourable to learn from those that advise well.*

* There is a passage very similar to this in Hesiod, which the readers of Aristotle will remember quoted in the first book of the Ethics:—

Κῆνος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει
 Φρασσάμενος τὰ κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμύνει·
 Ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ κακῆνος, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθεται.

CHO. O king ! it is fair, if he speak to the purpose, that you should learn from him ; and you, Hæmon, again from your father : for it has been well spoken on both sides.

CR. Shall we, of such an age, be taught wisdom by one of his time of life ?

HÆ. Nothing which is not just ; but, if I am a young man, it is not fitting to regard years more than works.

CR. For is it a good work to pay regard to those who are guilty of disobedience ?

HÆ. No, nor would I desire you to observe reverence towards the bad.

CR. For has not she been seized with such a disease ?

HÆ. The people that dwell together in this city of Thebe deny it.

CR. For shall the city dictate to me what it is proper for me to ordain ?

HÆ. Do you see how you have spoken this like a very young man ?

CR. For does it become any other one than me to rule this land ?

HÆ. That is not a state which is dependent on one man.

CR. Is not the state deemed the possession of its ruler ?

HÆ. No doubt :—in an uninhabited land at least you might rule alone.

Ὅς θεὸς καὶ μήτ' αὐτὸς νοίη, μήτ' ἄλλον ἀκούων
 Ἐν θυμῷ βάλλεται, ἰδ' αὖτ' ἀχρήσιος ἀνέχ.

HESIOD. *Erg.* 290.

CR. He, as it appears, fights in alliance with a woman.

HÆ. If you are a woman ; for my care is for you.

CR. Oh, utterly basest of wretches ! quarrelling with your father !

HÆ. For I see you committing the sin of injustice.

CR. Do I sin in paying reverence to my own dominion ?

HÆ. For you do not pay reverence when trampling under foot at least the honours of the Gods.

CR. Oh, accursed disposition, and enslaved to a woman !

HÆ. You will not, at all events, ever find me the slave of what is base.

CR. All your speech at least is for her.

HÆ. And for you too, and for me, and for the Gods below the earth.

CR. It may not be that you should ever now marry her in life.

HÆ. She then will die, and, dying, will destroy some one.^b

CR. Do you also, threatening, thus advance in audacity ?

HÆ. And what threat is it to argue against foolish opinions ?

CR. To your cost you shall school me, being yourself void of understanding.

^b Creon evidently supposes that Hæmon threatens his life, mistaking what is an ambiguous intimation of his purpose of destroying himself.

HÆ. If you were not my father, I would have said that you were a fool.

CR. Being the slave of a woman, do not revile me.¹

HÆ. Do you wish to utter some reproach, and uttering it, to hear nothing in return?

CR. Can this be true?—but know, by Olympus, that you shall not with impunity insult me with your revilings. Bring the hateful woman, that she may immediately die in the presence of her bridegroom, near him, and before his face.

HÆ. Never, near me at least, dream not this, shall she perish, and you shall no longer, beholding it with your eyes, see my face, since, in your intercourse with those who wish to be your friends, you act the part of a madman.

CHO. The man, O king! has departed, hurried in anger; and the mind, when pained at his years, is dreadful.

CR. Let him do what he pleases; let him, going, feel prouder thoughts than become a mortal: but he shall not release these virgins from their fate.

CHO. For do you intend to kill both of them?

CR. Not her at least who did not touch the body, for you suggest this well.

CHO. And by what sort of death do you meditate to destroy her?

CR. Conducting her where the way is untrodden by

¹ Κατίλλω generally means *adulator*, but here it is necessarily taken in an opposite sense. This mode of using the same word in a directly contrary signification is not uncommon. "Οιδος is a marked instance of it: Θήβαις κάλλιστος οἶδος. Eur. Phœn. 821.

mortals, I will bury her ^k alive in the cavern of the rock, only setting forth so much food as will suffice for expiation,^l in order that all the city may avoid the pollution. There, imploring Pluto, whom alone of Gods she reveres, she will obtain a respite from death, or will know at least then that it is lost trouble to pay reverence to those in the shades.

CHORUS.

O Love invincible! irresistible Love! who lightest on wealth,^m who makest thy couch in the soft

^k “In arcam inclusos tradunt non dissimili genere poenæ Danaën : Cyni liberos, (Lycophr. 239.) Comatam, (Theocrit. vii. 78.) denique Sotadem poetam, (Athen. xiv. cap. 4.)” *Musgrave.*

^l It is singular that in all cases of this live-burial, either ancient or modern, we find the custom prevail of leaving a certain quantity of food with the victim. In Greece it was held impious to suffer any one to die of famine, and this was a kind of juggling way of satisfying the conscience that the pollution was avoided. In modern times the practice seems to have been continued with the cruel object of prolonging the torments of such a horrible existence.

^m There have been a great many notes wasted on the word *πρῆμα* in the text, and a great many emendations proposed, in which Brunk may be safely allowed to have borne the palm for absurdity. The whole quarrel of his tribe, with the word, is indeed quite unnecessary and unreasonable. They allege that love does not select wealth more than poverty for his object, and on this weak ground take a decided stand against the poet. Even though their doctrine were true, it is of no consequence in this point, where the description is in division of the all-pervading power: but there are two lines, which are sadly opposite to their theoretical nonsense, quoted by Musgrave, from Seneca, Hippol. 208.

“Cur in penates rarius tenues subit
Hæc delicatas eligens pestis domos?”

cheeks of the damsel in her youth, and roamest beyond the sea, and mid the rural cots, thee shall neither any of the immortals escape, nor of men the creatures of a day:° but he that feels thee is maddened. Thou for their ruin seducest the minds of the just to injustice: thou hast stirred up this strife of kindred men, and desire revealed from the eyes of the beauteous bride wins the victory, desire that holds its seat beside the mighty laws in heaven's rule; for matchless in fight the Goddess Venus enjoys her sport. But now already I too am borne without the pale of laws, beholding this spectacle; and I am no longer able to restrain the fountains of tears, when I here see Antigone passing on her way to the chamber where all repose.

ANT. Behold me, ye citizens of the land of my fathers, advancing on this last journey, and beholding the light of the sun for this last time and never again; but

“ ————— Chias
Pulchris excubat in genis.”

HORACE.

* We may safely put in contrast with this chorus, though highly beautiful, the following lines, on the same subject, from one of the first of modern poets:—

“ In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.”

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, CANTO III. 2.

Orcus, whose chamber receives all, conducts me, living, to the shore of Acheron, neither blessed with the lot of wedlock,^p nor hath the nuptial lay been chaunted for me, but I shall be the bride of Acheron.

CHO. Therefore in renown and enjoying praise you descend to this sepulchre of the dead, neither struck by wasting disease, nor having received the award of the sword; but in freedom and in life you alone of mortals shall descend to the shades.

ANT. I have heard, that by a most mournful fate, perished, on the promontory of Sipylus, the Phrygian stranger,^q daughter of Tantalus. Her, like the clinging ivy, did the shoots of rock subdue; and her, dissolving away in showers, as the legends of mortals tell, the snow never leaves; and from her eyes, that ever flow with tears, she bedews the cliffs. Like her, the God lulls me to sleep.

CHO. But she was a Goddess, and of heavenly birth;

^p Antigone, in these beautiful and swan-like dirges, more than once expresses her regret for never having experienced the marriage joys. There is nothing indelicate, except to the eye of false refinement, in this candid declaration of natural feeling. We find an equally pure illustration of the same sentiment in the case of Jephtha's daughter, who went "and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains." Her example was even admired; for "it was a custom in Israel, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephtha the Gileadite four days in a year." Judges xi.

^q Niobe, who was changed into stone for having bragged Latona with her children. Agathius, an old quaint fool, has the following lines on this *hard* punishment:—

Ὁ τίμωτος οὗτος ἔσθ' οὐκ ἔχει νίκην,

Ὁ νικῶς οὗτος ἔσθ' οὐκ ἔχει τάφον.

and we are mortals, and of mortals born. And yet to you, a perishable creature, it is high fame to meet with a lot like the peers of the Gods.

ANT. Woe is me ! I am derided. Why, by the Gods of my fathers, do you insult me, not yet dead, but still on earth ? O my country ! O my countrymen, high in wealth ! O ye fountains of Dirce, and grove of Thebe, the renowned for the car ! I take you withal jointly to witness, how unlamented by my friends, and by what laws I go to the sepulchral dungeon of my untimely tomb. O, woe is me ! who am neither a dweller among men nor shades, the living nor the dead.

CHO. Having advanced to the extreme of audacity, thou hast violently dashed my child, against the lofty throne of justice. Thou payest some penalty of thy father.

ANT. Thou hast touched on a sorrow the most painful to me, the well-known griefs of my father, and the fate of all our race, the illustrious children of Labdacus. Woe ! for the curses that attended my mother's bed, the incestuous connection of my wretched mother with my father, from which I, unhappy, formerly sprung ; and now, doomed to ruin, and unblessed by nuptials, I depart to sojourn with my parents. O my brother ! having met with an ill-fated marriage,^{*} you destroy in your death me, still in life !

CHO. To pay such reverence indeed to the dead, is

^{*} Polynices wedded the daughter of Adrastus, king of Argos ; and being, from this powerful alliance, induced to undertake the expedition against Thebes, he met with his own death, and entailed a still more wretched fate on his sister.

a token of piety ; but power, to whomsoever power is entrusted, must not in any way be transgressed. Thy self-willed temper has destroyed thee.

ANT. Unwept, and friendless, and unwedded, I, wretched, am conducted on this destined way. It is no longer allowed me, unhappy, to look on this sacred eye of the blazing sun ; and no friend laments over my deeply wretched doom.

CR. Know ye not that no one would cease from dirges and wailings before death, if it were of avail to utter them ? Will ye not conduct her as quickly as possible, and depart, having enclosed her, as I directed, by herself alone in the caverned tomb ? whether it is fated she shall die or lead a sepulchral life in such a dwelling. For we are free from pollution as respects this virgin, and she then shall be deprived of abode in upper air.

ANT. O tomb ! O bridal chamber ! O hollow dwelling ! that must ever contain me, where I go to my own, of whom slain Proserpine has received the greatest number among the dead, and of whom I descend the last, and by a fate far the most wretched, before having fulfilled my term of life ! Departing, however, I strongly nourish the hope that I shall come dear to my father, and dear to thee, my mother, and dear to thee, O face of my brother ; since I, with my own hand, washed you when dead, and decked you out, and poured the libations over your tomb : and now, Polynices, having buried your body, I gain such a reward. And yet, in the opinion of those who have just sentiments, I honoured you aright. For neither, though I had been the mother of children, nor though

my husband dying, had mouldered away, would I have undertaken this toil against the will of the citizens. On account of what law do I say this? There would have been another husband for me if the first died, and if I lost my child there would have been another from another man; but my father and my mother being laid in the grave, it is impossible a brother should ever be born to me.* On the principle of such a law, having preferred you, my brother, to all other considerations, I seemed to Creon to commit a sin, and to dare what was dreadful. And now, seizing me by force, he thus leads me away, having never enjoyed the nuptial bed, nor heard the nuptial lay, nor having gained the lot of marriage, nor of rearing my children: but thus I, an unhappy woman, deserted by my friends, go, while alive, to the cavern of the dead. Having transgressed,—what justice of the Gods? what need is there for me, a miserable wretch, to look any longer to the Gods? What ally can I invoke, since at least by observing piety, I have obtained the reward of impiety? But if these things be approved of by

* There is a story in Herodotus, of this very principle having been acted upon. The whole family of Intaphernes being condemned to death, his wife prevailed on Darius, by her lamentations, to grant her the life of one of her kindred. She chose to save her brother, and gave the same reasons as Antigone for neglecting her husband and children. The two ladies may reason very subtilely on the point, but the principle they go upon is evidently false. The original institution, that "a man should leave his father and his mother, and should cleave unto his wife," is no less agreeable to nature, than to reason and revelation. The example of Alcestis will always be more admired than that of the wife of Intaphernes.

the Gods, by suffering, we will be made conscious of our error ; but if my enemies be guilty, may they not suffer more evils than they unjustly inflict on me.

CHO. The same fury of the same tempest of the soul still possesses her.

CR. Tears, therefore, shall arise to those who conduct her, for their slowness.

ANT. Woe is me ! this command has come close upon death.

CR. I give you no hope to console you that these things shall not be consummated in this way.

ANT. O my native city of the land of Thebe, and Gods of my father's race, I am hurried along, and have no more respite. Behold, ye rulers of Thebes, the last remaining of the royal race, what deeds I suffer at the hands of what men for having revered religion.

CHO. 'The form of Danae, too, submitted to bid farewell to the light of heaven, in dungeons secured with brass, and concealed in a sepulchral chamber, she was bowed to the yoke of necessity. And yet she was honoured in her race, my child, my child, and cherished the seed of Jove, that flowed in golden shower. But there is a certain marvellous power of fate. Neither tempest, nor war, nor towers, nor black ships, that dash through the sea, escape its control. To

‘ The Chorus, in this wild and beautiful strain, console Antigone with the enumeration of other fates as wretched as her own. It has been well enough observed, that the examples they quote of Danae and Lycurgus, are not compared to her in their crimes, but their sufferings.

that yoke, too, was bowed the fiery son of Dryas,^a king of the Edonians, being prisoned by Bacchus for his virulent temper in the bonds of rock; and thus he distils the dreadful venom of madness, ever bursting up afresh. He knew, when too late, that he had glanced at the God in his frenzy with reviling words. For he would have put a stop to the inspired maids and the mystic flame; and chafed the Muses, the lovers of song. By the Cyanean deeps of the double sea, the shores of the Bosphorus, and the Thracian Salmydessus, (where Mars dwells near their cities,) saw the accursed wound, inflicted with blindness, on the two sons of Phineus, by a fell ^astep-mother, a darkening wound, imprinted on the wretched balls of their eyes, with bloody hands, by the spear, and the points of the shuttle: and pining away in misery, they wept the wretched sufferings of their mother, who bore the children of an ill-fated marriage. But she owned the seed of the sons of ^yErectheus, of ancient lineage; and in far distant caves was nursed, amid the storms of her father, a

^a The son of Dryas was Lycurgus, who, having routed the Bacchanians from his territory, was punished by their God with some severe doom, here described as imprisonment, but variously related by various authors.

^y Idæa, who barbarously put out the eyes of Plexippus and Pandion, the sons of Phineus, by his first wife, Cleopatra.

^y Her mother Orithyia was the daughter of Erectheus, and wife of Boreas. It was on this claim of kindred that the Athenians, in obedience to the oracle, asked the aid of their son-in-law Boreas during the Persian invasion.

daughter of *Boreas, rivalling the steed in swiftness, as she bounded over the lofty mountains, child of Heaven ; but even over her, my daughter, the eternal Fates prevailed.

TIRESIAS.

Ye princes of Thebes, we come on this common way, two seeing by one, for the journey of the blind is made by a guide.

CR. But what new event, O aged Tiresias, has happened ?

TIR. I will teach you, and do you obey the prophet.

CR. I was not formerly wont to depart from your advice.

TIR. Wherefore you direct aright the helm of this state.

CR. I testify the advantages I have experienced.

TIR. Consider that you now again stand on the very edge of fortune.

CR. What is it ? How I shudder at your words !

TIR. You shall know, hearing the signs of my art. For, sitting down on my ancient augural seat, where was my station for all augury, I hear an unknown sound of birds, beating the air with ill-omened and unwonted fury, and I perceived that they were tearing each other with bloody talons ; for the clashing of their wings gave clear indication. Being alarmed, I straightway essayed the divination by fire on the blazing altars ; and from the sacrifice the flame burst

* *Boreas, Æðos*, a patronymic appellation for a nymph descended from Boreas.

not forth, but on the ashes a clammy vapour kept oozing from the thighs, and burnt up, and sputtered, and the entrails were scattered in air, and the thighs,^a melting away, fell out from the involving cawl. Such expiring^b bodings of mysterious rites I learned from this boy; for he is a guide to me, and I to others. And the city is afflicted with this from your determination: for our altars, and all our hearths, are full of birds and dogs, feeding on the body of the wretched son of Œdipus; and the Gods no longer accept from us the sacrificial prayer, nor the flame of the thighs, nor does bird send forth the notes of propitious omen, being gorged with the fat of human gore. These things therefore, my son, consider; for it is common to all men to err: but when one may err, he is no longer an unwise nor an infatuated man, who, having fallen into evil, is cured, nor remains immoveable. Obstinacy incurs the imputation of folly. War not with the fallen, nor wound the dead. What prowess is it to slay the slain? Being well-disposed towards you, I advise you well; and it is most pleasing to learn from a good adviser, if his advice bring advantage.

CR. Old man, ye all, like archers at a mark, discharge your shafts at me; and I am not unacquainted with the arts of prophets, by the race of whom I have

^a The thighs were the part of the sacrifice appropriated to the Gods, because, says Eustathius, they are useful to men for walking and generation. It is clear enough that the thighs are considerably useful in these important functions, but why for this reason they should be peculiarly acceptable to the Gods is by no means so obvious.

^b Φθίνει, evanescencia. Mali ominis erat in ignispiculis quicquid debile et evanidum erat. *Musgrave.*

long since been made the subject of barter and traffic. Pursue your gain, make your purchase, if you choose, of the amber of Sardis, and the gold of India ; but him ye shall never enclose in the tomb ; not even though the eagles of Jove, seizing him as their prey, should bear him to the throne of the God ; not even thus, dreading the pollution, would I permit his burial. For I well know that no mortal is able to pollute the Gods. But, O aged Tiresias, even those men who are clever in many things, meet with disgraceful falls, when, for the sake of gain, they plead speciously a base argument.

TIR. Ha ! Does any man know, does he consider——

CR. What is the matter ? What trite saying is this ?

TIR. By how much wisdom is the best of possessions ?

CR. By so much, methinks, as folly is the greatest bane.

TIR. You, however, are by nature full of this malady.

CR. I do not wish to reply with reproach to a prophet.

TIR. And yet you do, saying that I prophesy what is false.

CR. For all the race of prophets are lovers of gain.

TIR. But that of kings loves base gain.

CR. Do you know that you address what you say to your rulers ?

TIR. I know it ; for having preserved by my means this city, you sway it.

CR. You are a skilful prophet, but given to injustice.

TIR. You will force me to utter the secrets that lie unmoved in my breast.

CR. Move them, only do not speak for gain.

TIR. For thus do I already seem to have spoken, as far as regards your part?

CR. Know that you shall not sell my resolution.

TIR. But do you too know well, that you shall not any longer see to their end many hastening courses of the sun, before that yourself repay one sprung from your own bowels, dead, a recompence for the dead, in return for having sent one who was in upper air below the earth, and dishonourably made a living being to dwell in the tomb, and for having detained here one debarred from intercourse with the infernal deities, and deprived of funeral obsequies an unhallowed corse; in which things, neither any concern appertains to you, nor to the Gods above. But these things are done with violent injustice by you; for this, the Furies of Orcus and of the Gods, avenging with penal consequence, lie in ambush for you, that you may be enthralled by the same misfortunes. See if, induced by money, I prophesy this: for the lapse of no long time shall exhibit the mourning of men and women in your palace; and all the ^cstates shall be stirred up together in enmity, the mangled bodies of

^c Those states that had joined in the expedition, and whose dead were all left unburied. Their being stirred up in enmity is a prophetic allusion to the expedition of the Epigoni, who conquered Thebes, to revenge the misfortunes of their fathers before its walls.

whose citizens the dogs have polluted, or wild beasts, or any winged bird, bearing an unhallowed stench to the altars of the city. Such unerring arrows, since you pain me, I have discharged, like an archer, in anger from my soul, and their warm smart you shall not escape. But do you, boy, conduct me home, that he may vent his passion upon those of fewer years, and may know to nurse a more temperate tongue, and feelings better than the mind he now bears.

CHO. The man, O king, has departed, having predicted dreadful events; and I know, from the time that I changed this hair into white from black, that he never once declared to the city what was false.

CR. I also have known it, and I am disturbed in my thoughts: but to yield were cowardly; and there is danger that, by resisting, I afflict my mind with calamity.

CHO. There is need, O Creon, son of Menœceus, of prudent counsel.

CR. What, in truth, is it requisite to do? Tell me, and I will obey.

CHO. Going, release the virgin from her subterraneous abode, and prepare a tomb for the body that lies exposed.

CR. And do you approve of this, and think I ought to yield?

CHO. Aye, and as quickly too, O king, as possible; for the swift footed vengeance of Heaven cuts short those who are of wicked minds.

CR. Ah me! it is with difficulty indeed, but still I am changed from my purpose to do it. We must not maintain an unequal combat with necessity.

CHO. Going, now, do these things; do not entrust them to others.

CR. Thus, as I am, I will go. But ye attendants, both present and absent, taking axes in your hands, rush to the conspicuous spot; and since my opinion has been converted in this way, as I myself bound her, so, being present, I will set her at liberty; for I fear lest it be not best, preserving the established laws, to close life.

CHORUS.

O thou, who art hailed by many a name,^d glory of the Theban nymph, and son of deeply-thundering Jove, who swayest renowned Italia, and presidest o'er the rites of Ceres, in the vales of Eleusis, open to all! O Bacchus, who dwellest in Thebe, the mother city of the Bacchanals, by the flowing streams of Ismenus, and the fields where the teeth of the fell dragon were sown; thee, the smoke beheld as it burst into flame above the

^d Bacchus was rich in names, chiefly derived from his attributes. There were Lyæus, Lenæus, Bassereus, Bromius, Euius, Eleleus, Dithyrambus, and fifty others.

^e στίγμψ—λιγνὺς, lucidus, vel candens, fulgidus vapor. *Musgrave*. This smoke or flame, or both, which denoted the presence or approach of the God on the summits of Parnassus, is frequently celebrated by the poets.

ἰὼ λαμπρῶσα πίτρεα πυρὸς
 διόρυφοι σίλας, ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
 Βακχῶων.

EURIP. PHŒNISS. 237.

ἴθα πῦρ πηδᾶ θεῶ
 Βακχῶων.

EURIP. ION. 1125.

double-crested rock, where roam the 'Corycian nymphs, the votaries of Bacchus, and the fount of Castalia flows; and thee the ivy-crowned steeps of the Nysian^g mountains, and the green shore, clothed with vines, send along amid immortal words, that sound thy acclaim, to reign the guardian of the streets of Thebe, whom you honour highest of all cities, along with your mother that perished by the thunder. And now, since the city with all its people is enthralled by a violent disease, come with healing steps, over the slopes of Parnassus, or the resounding ^hgulf of the sea. O leader of the choir of flame-breathing stars,ⁱ director of the voices that sound by night, youthful God, son of Jove, reveal thyself along with thy ministering Moenads, the Naxian maids, who maddening through the live-long night, celebrate thee with the dance, thee their lord Iacchus.

MESSENGER.

Ye inhabitants of the abodes of Cadmus and Amphion, it is impossible that I should ever praise or blame the life of man in whatever condition it may be: for Fortune always raises, and Fortune casts down the prosperous and the unprosperous; and no one is prescient of what is decreed for mortals. For Creon once, as appeared to me, was enviable, having preserved this

^r So called from the Corycian grotto, their consecrated abode at the foot of mount Parnassus.

^g There were various mountains of this name. Nysa, in Eubœa, is supposed to be the one alluded to here.

^h Crossing from Eubœa to Bœotia.

ⁱ Some take these words literally, others regard them as figurative of the torches borne by the Bacchanals.

land of Cadmus from the enemy, and receiving the complete dominion of the country, he directed it, happily flourishing with a noble race of children; and now all is gone. For when a man loses the pleasures of life, I do not consider him to live, but look upon him as the living dead. Let him have great wealth, if you choose, in his house, and live with the outward splendour of a king; but if joy be wanting to these, I would not purchase the rest with the shadow of smoke compared with real pleasure.

CHO. What burden of sorrow on our princes is this again, that you come to tell?

MESS. They are dead: and the living are guilty of their death.

CHO. And who was the slayer? and who is the slain?—speak.

MESS. Hæmon has perished, and by a suicidal hand he is dyed with blood.

CHO. Whether by his father's hand, or by his own?

MESS. Himself, by his own hand, being angry with his father on account of the murder.

CHO. O prophet! how you have correctly declared this prediction!

MESS. As these things being so, you may deliberate on the rest.

* The ignorance of fat-brained commentators has led them to make a row about this question being put by the Chorus, after the messenger had announced the death of Hæmon by his own hand. The Scholiast, simple soul, will have it, that the Chorus in their agitation, heard no more than the words, "Hæmon has perished." Musgrave and Heath blunder in an equally pitiable manner. Any one who had read ten lines of Greek poetry, ought to have known that the dying by a kindred hand was considered and spoken of as suicide.

CHO. And in truth I see near at hand the wretched Eurydice, wife of Creon ; and having either heard of her son, or by chance she is passing from the palace.

EURIDICE.

O all ye citizens, I heard the rumour, at least, as I was going out in order that I might repair to the temple of the goddess Pallas, her suppliant in prayer ; and I chance to be undoing the bars of the fastened gate, and the voice of domestic affliction strikes my ears. Moved by terror, I fall prostrate in the arms of my attendants, and faint away. But whatever was the tale, repeat it : for not untried by misfortune, I will hear it.

MESS. I, my dear mistress, being present, will tell it, and I will not omit a word of the truth. For why should I alleviate that to you in which I should afterwards be detected of falsehood ? The truth is always right. I followed your husband an attendant on foot to the extremity of the plain, where still lay the unpitied body of Polynices, mangled by dogs ; and him, indeed, having implored the Goddess that is placed in the high-ways¹ and Pluto to have propitious dispositions, we bathed with holy lavations, and having consumed what remained of the body, with fresh-plucked boughs, and piled up a lofty barrow of his native soil, we again repair to the rocky cavern, the bridal chamber of the grave's betrothed. And some one hears at a distance the voice of loud lament beside that unconsecrated chamber, and hastening he tells it to our master,

¹ Trivia, Hecate, or Proserpine.

Creon : but round him, as he approached nearer, there float the indistinct notes of wretched wailings, and shrieking, he utters these mournful words : " O unhappy me ! am I then a true prophet ? Do I now advance on the most ill-fated way of all that I have gone before ? The voice of my son movingly falls upon me. Go with speed, ye attendants, nearer, and standing by the tomb ascertain (having entered by the very mouth the barrier of the mound where the stone is drawn aside) if I hear the voice of Hæmon or am deceived by the Gods." On the command of our desponding master we examined the place, and we see in the extremity of the tumulus, the virgin, hanging by the neck, suspended in the woven noose of her linen robe, and the youth lying beside her with his arms around her waist, deploring the destruction of his bride below the earth, and the deeds of his father, and his ill-starred nuptials. But Creon, when he sees him, having uttered a dismal groan, goes in towards him, and in the loud tone of grief calls on him : " O wretched man, what sort of deed have you done ? What mind had you ? In what circumstance of calamity are you ruined ? Come forth, my son, suppliant, I beseech you." But his son, glaring on him with savage eyes, spitting on his face, and replying nothing, draws his double-edged sword :^m but his father rushing away in flight, he missed him ; then the ill-fated man,

^m Aristotle very justly finds fault with this incident. There is something horrible and unnatural in the attempt of a son to slay his own father, and since he fails to execute his purpose, there is no tragical effect produced. The spectator ought not to be shocked unnecessarily.

enraged with himself, immediately stretching out^a the sword, drove it to the middle in his side, and still in possession of his senses, with his enfeebled arm he embraces the virgin;^o and panting, he sends up the keen gusts of gory drops on her snowy cheek. And the unhappy man lies dead embracing the dead, having obtained his nuptial rites in the mansions of Pluto, a proof to the world of rashness, how it attaches to man the greatest of his ills.

CHO. What can you conjecture this to mean? The woman has some time since disappeared before uttering word, good or bad.^p

: MÆSS. I myself also am astonished; but I live in the hope that, hearing the calamities of her son, she does not deign to make her lamentations public, but within, beneath the roof of the palace, will appoint her maids to mourn a domestic sorrow: for she is not devoid of judgment, so as to commit what is improper.

: CHO. I know not: for to me, at least, a deep silence

^a *ἐκστράβης*. Pro *ἐκστραβάμενος*. Sic, ut erat, ensem intentans. *Musgrave*.

* This description of the two ill-fated lovers, the dying and the dead, contains the very essence of poetry, and tragic beauty. A finer subject for a picture cannot well be imagined.

† There is something very striking and fearful in the moody silence of deep passion or despair.

————— *ἰδοιχ' ὅπως*
μὴ κ' τῆς σιωπῆς τῆσδ' ἀναβῇ κακά.

CÆDIP. TYRANN. 1074.

A few lines below, the Chorus also express this same feeling of apprehension, arising from the same cause.

seems to portend something grievous, and an excess of clamorous grief to be without consequence.

MISS. But going within the palace, we will inform ourselves whether she secretly conceals in her enraged heart any unlawful purpose: for your suggestion is good, and there is something grievous in too deep silence.

CHO. And in truth here comes the king himself, having a memorable token^a in his hand, if we may lawfully so say,—no calamity from a foreign source, but he himself its guilty author.

CR. Alas! the irreparable and deadly errors of a perverted mind! O ye, who look on the kindred slayers and the slain! Oh me! for the infatuation of my counsels! O my son! my son! in your youth by an untimely fate, [woe, woe, woe, woe!] thou hast died, thou hast departed by mine, not thy rashness!

CHO. Ah me! how you seem too late to perceive justice.

CR. Ah me! I wretched gain it by experience; and on my head the God then dashed with heavy impulse, and drove me on to furious ways; having, alas! overturned to be trampled beneath foot my former joy. Alas! alas! O the toils of mortals! hapless toils!

MESSENGER.

O master, how, both having and possessing, you

^a Creon, it would appear from this, comes in, carrying the dead body of Hæmon. Shakspeare, in a similar way, introduces Lear with Cordelia in his arms. The incident is well calculated for stage effect: but the Goths, who have mangled Lear for representation, have now left out the scene of "that fair dead daughter."

bear these evils in your hands, and you seem coming soon about to behold other evils in your palace.

CR. And what, after these calamities, is there still more calamitous?

MESS. Your wife is dead, the full mother of this corpse, in an unhappy fate by wounds just fresh inflicted.

CR. O port of the grave, that no expiation may soothe, why, why do you destroy me? O thou that hast conveyed to me the evil tidings of sorrow, what tale dost thou tell? Alas! alas! thou hast a second time dispatched a dead man. What, O man, dost thou say? What new intelligence dost thou deliver? Woe, woe, woe, woe! that the death of my wife, by murder is added to the destruction of my son?

MESS. You may behold it; for the body is no longer in the inner recesses.

CR. Woe is me! this other succeeding evil I wretched behold. What then, what fate yet awaits me? I, an unhappy wretch, am already bearing in my arms my son, and I see opposite that other dead body. Alas! alas, O wretched mother! alas, my son!

MESS. She, in keen anger, falling down beside the altar, closes her darkening eyes, having first, indeed, bewailed the illustrious bed of Megareus, who formerly died; and again of him before us; and last, having imprecated a baneful fortune on you the murderer of your children.

CR. Woe, woe, woe, woe! I am fluttered with fear. Why does not some one give me a mortal wound with the double-edged sword? A wretched man am I, alas! alas! and in a wretched fate am I involved.

MESS. As being guilty at least of both the one fate and the other, you were charged by her as she died.

CR. But in what way did she depart from life in the slaughter?

MESS. Having with her own hand pierced herself below the liver, when she heard the deeply-mournful sufferings of her son.

CR. Woe is me! this guilt will never apply to any other but me: for I, a miserable wretch, I have slain thee: I say the truth. O ye attendants, ye attendants, conduct me, with all speed conduct me without; me who am no more than a nonentity.

CHO. You advise what is advantageous, if there be any thing advantageous in misfortunes: for present evils, when shortest, are best.

CR. Let it come, let it come, let the last of my fates appear, bringing most happily to me the close of my days: let it come, let it come, so that I may never behold another day.

MESS. Those things are future: of these things present command what we ought to do; for the others are a care to those whom it behoves to have this care.

CR. But I prayed for those things I desire.

MESS. Pray now for nothing; since there is no escape to mortals from predestined calamity.

CR. Lead away now without this shadow of a man, who, O my son, unwillingly slew thee, and thee, too, my wife. O wretched man that I am! I neither know whither nor to whom I should look, nor whither I should turn my steps: for every thing misguided,

both in my hands and over my head, has an intolerable fate made to burst upon me.

CHO. Wisdom is by far the highest part of happiness : and it behoves us not to be guilty of irreverence in those things at least that concern the Gods ; for the haughty words of the vaunting, paying the penalty of severe affliction, have taught wisdom to old age.

TRACHINIÆ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DEIANIRA.
ATTENDANT.
HYLLUS.
CHORUS.
MESSENGER.
LICHAS.
NURSE.
OLD MAN.
HERCULES.

TRACHINIÆ.

DEIANIRA.

THERE is an ancient saying, renowned among men, that you cannot fully judge of the life of mortals, whether it has been good or bad to an individual, before his death.^a But I, even before I come to the realms of Pluto, know that I have led my life in misfortune and calamity; I, who indeed, while dwelling in the palace of my father Æneus, in Pleuron,^b felt the greatest horror of nuptials of all the Ætolian maids. For my suitor was a river, I mean the Achelöus, who, in three forms, sought me of my father; now coming

^a This sentiment is common enough; but the way in which it is here talked of, as famous and proverbial, shews us that Sophocles had in view the speech of Solon to Cræsus. If he meant to make Deianira quote Solon, he is guilty of a very gross anachronism.

^b Pleuron was the capital of Ætolia, and is reported to have been a city of great splendour in the early ages of Greece.

in manifest shape, a bull ; at another time, a speckled wreathed snake ; and at a third, in the body of a man, with the head of a bull ; and from his thick-shady beard, the streams of liquid founts kept flowing. I, wretched, having received such a suitor, always prayed to die before I should ever approach his bed. And in late time indeed, but to my joy, came the illustrious son of Jove, and Alcmena, who, engaging with this monster in the strife of battle, delivers me. The manner of their fray I am not able to describe ; for I know it not ; but whosoever sat undismayed during the spectacle, he could tell it.^d For I sat confounded with terror, lest my beauty might, on a time, work my bane. But Jove, the arbiter of conflicts, disposed the issue well, if in truth it be well ; for being united his awarded bride to Hercules, I ever sustain fear succeeding fear in boding cares for him, since night brings, and night in turn removes some toil. And I indeed have borne him children, whom, like a husbandman that hath a field far distant, he hath once only looked on in the seed-time, and once again in the harvest. Such a life sends from home and to home, the hero always

* This seems to have been the common way, in ancient times, of representing rivers. Homer has frequent allusions to it ; and Horace applies the epithet "tauriformis" to the Aufidus, at a time when such superstitions had rather gone by. There are various accounts given of the origin and meaning of this fanciful custom ; but that which supposes it to have some reference to the overflowing of the Nile, when the sun enters the Bull, though far-fetched, is perhaps the least absurd.

^d A spirited description of the combat is given by the Chorus in this play, v. 500—530.

paying service to some one :^c and now, when he has reached the goal of these labours, here in truth I feel most alarmed. For since the time that he slew the mighty Iphitus,^f we indeed, changing our abode, dwell here in Trachis, with a hospitable chief :^g but where he has gone, no one knows : but he has departed, leaving bitter pangs to me on his account ; and I am almost sure that he has met with some mishap. For he remains for no small space of time, but already for ten months, in addition to other five, without sending any tidings ; and there must be some dreadful misfortune. Of this purport he left me, at his departure, a writing, which I often pray to the Gods to have received unaccompanied by calamity.

ATTENDANT.

My mistress, Deianira, I have already seen you bewailing the departure of Hercules with many weeping laments ; and now, if it be right to admonish the free-born with the opinions of a slave, it behoves even me

^c Eurystheus, king of Mycenæ, was the great task-master of Hercules. The Fates had decreed that the one of them who was first born should have the other for his slave. Juno, the implacable step-mother of Hercules, took advantage of her power as the Goddess of child-birth, to give Eurystheus the important start. Virgil alludes to this circumstance, *Æn.* vii. v. 291.

“ ————— duros mille labores
Rege sub Eurystheo, fatis Junonis iniquæ,
Pertulit.”

^f The murder of Iphitus is related in this play, v. 270—275.

^g Ceyx, the king of Trachis.

this much to suggest. How, indeed, do you abound with so many children, yet do not send some one in search of your husband, and especially Hyllus, whom it becomes to shew if he bears any regard for his father's prosperity? But here he himself, near at hand, is bounding towards the house with vigorous step; so that, if I seem to you to give seasonable advice, it is in your power to avail yourself of the presence of the youth, and of my words.

DEI. O child, O my son, even from the ignobly born noble words proceed: for this woman, indeed, is a slave, but she has spoken no slavish speech.

HYLLUS.

Of what import?—tell me, mother, if it may be told.

DEI. That it brings reproach on you, your father having been so long abroad, not to make inquiry where he is.

HYL. But I know, if at least one may believe reports.

DEI. And where on earth do you hear, my child, that he is situated?

HYL. They say that for the by-past year he has laboured through its long period in bondage to a Lydian woman^b.

DEI. One may therefore hear every thing if he submitted to thisⁱ.

^b Omphale.

ⁱ "Quæri potest, cur tantopere Deianira indignetur Omphalæ Herculem servire qui antea per tot annos Eurystheo servilem operam præ-

HYL. But he is released from this at least, as I learn.

DEI. Where now then, living or dead, is he reported to be?

HYL. They say that he leads, or is still on the point of leading, an expedition against the land of Eubœa and the city of Eurytus.

DEI. Know you then, my son, how he left to me unerring predictions concerning this land?

HYL. Of what kind, mother? for I am ignorant of the tale.

DEI. That he is either about to bring his life to its close, or, having accomplished this labour, for the future to spend the remainder of his days in a tranquil existence. Will you not then, my son, go to aid him, depending on this crisis, since we are either preserved, if he preserve his life, or at the same time depart and fall, if your father perish.

HYL. But I go, oh mother! and, if I had known the annunciation of these oracles, even formerly I would have been present. But now, since I know the intelligence, I will omit no endeavour to learn the whole truth concerning these circumstances. But the usual fortune of my father does not permit us to feel foreboding fear, nor to be deeply dismayed.

DEI. Go now, my son; for even he that is late in doing well, yet, when he learns his duty, procures gain.

stiterat. Mihi videntur duæ hujus indignationis causæ fuisse, prima, quod fœminæ, altera vero quod Lydæ, i. e. barbaræ in servitutem addictus fuerat." *Musgrave.*

CHORUS.

Whom spangled night, as she resigns her glories, gives birth to, and again lulls to sleep, the Sun^k, the blazing Sun, I implore to tell me of Alcmena's son, where, where at all he dwells, oh thou that beamest with refulgent splendours, whether on some ocean isthmus, or resting on either continent¹; tell me, oh thou, who in power of vision art unmatched! For I learn that Deianira, who was the object of rivalry, ever with longing thoughts, like some wretched bird, refuses to seal in slumber the regret of her tearful eyes; but cherishing a terror ever present to her mind, on account of the journey of her lord, pines away on her widowed couch of care, in expectation of an evil and wretched doom. For as one may behold many billows urged by the blasts of the unwearied north or south advancing, and speeding in succession over the wide ocean,—thus life's many cares nurse the infancy, and rear the manhood of the Theban hero, like waves on the Cretan main: but some God ever preserves him in safety from the mansions of Pluto. On account of

^k Ἀλλὰ σὺ γὰρ δὴ πᾶσαι ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κατὰ πόντον
αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης καταδερκίαι ἀπτίνοσι,
νημερίως μὲν ἵησσι, φίλον τέκος ἢ που ὄππῃ.

HOMER. HYMN. IN CER. V. 69.

¹ It is rather absurd to suppose that Hercules could be on the two continents at the same moment. Musgrave, after reprehending the inaccuracy of the expression, makes a very good natured excuse for it in these words: "Sed nimis severi sumus, nec tanta loquendi subtilitas a poeta exigenda."

which reprehending you, I will suggest what is pleasing indeed, but opposite to your thoughts. For I say that you ought not to cast away good hopes, since he that reigns supreme, the son of Saturn, hath not allotted all things to mortals devoid of calamity; but sorrow and joy return in course to all, like the revolving paths of the Bear. For neither does spangled night remain to mortals, nor the fates, nor wealth; but in a moment they are gone: and to the same mortal succeed joy and the loss of joy. Wherefore I bid you, my queen, in hope ever to retain these reflections; since who hath seen Jove thus devoid of care for his children?

DEI. You are present, having learned, as may be conjectured, my sufferings: but how I pine in spirit, may you never learn by experience. Now you are ignorant of its woe, for youth is pastured in such vales of its own; and neither does the heat of heaven, nor showers, nor any gale, disturb it; but it builds up with pleasures a life of ease, until one be called a wife instead of a virgin, and receive her share of anxiety in the hours of night, either fearing for her husband or her children. Then might any woman perceive, considering her own condition, by what evils I am weighed down. Many sufferings indeed then have I lamented; but one such as I have never before [lamented,] will I immediately disclose. For when the royal Hercules departed on his last journey from home, then he leaves in the palace an ancient tablet, inscribed with mandates, which before, though going forth to many combats, he never had the heart to disclose to me; but he went, as about to achieve some feat, and not to fall.

But now, as though he were no more, he told me that it was fitting I should take my marriage portion, and told me what share of their paternal property he awarded to be divided to his children; having appointed, that when he should be gone a year and three months from the country, it was either fated he should die in this time, or, escaping the close of its period, should live for the future in a life free from pain. Such things, he said, were decreed for consummation by the Gods concerning the labours of Hercules, as the ancient beech-tree at Dodona had formerly announced by the lips of the twin doves^m. And the certainty of these predictions coincides with the present time, so that it is necessary they should be accomplished. Thus, my friends, while sweetly slumbering, I start from repose, agitated with terror, lest it be fated that I should remain bereft of the best of all men.

CHO. Speak now words of good omen, since I see some messenger advancing, crowned with garlands on account of his tidings.

MESSENGER.

Deianira, my queen, I, first of messengers, will release you from your apprehensions; for, know that the son of Alcmena is living, and is crowned with con-

^m Those who wish for an account of the oracular doves of Dodona may consult Herodotus, lib. ii. 55. where they will find an explanation scarcely less absurd than the original fable. Eustathius and the Scholiast both offer their conjectures on the point, without considering it at all requisite to be within the verge of probability. May not the story have arisen from some of the deluded votaries having pleasantly satirized their folly for being *pigeoned* at Dodona?

quest, and, the battle over, is bringing its first-fruits to the Gods of his country,

DEI. What words are these, old man, that you have spoken to me?

MESS. That quickly to thy palace shall come thy much-desired lord, returning with his triumphant powers.

DEI. And from what citizen or stranger did you learn the tidings you tell?

MESS. The herald Lichas, his attendant, is proclaiming these things in the verdant meadow. Hearing them from him, I rushed away, in order that, having first related them to you, I might gain something at your hands, and acquire favour^a.

DEI. But how, if well he speed, is he himself absent?

MESS. Because, O lady, he encounters some difficulty: for all the Melian people, standing round him in a circle, interrogate him; nor is it in his power to advance farther. Each wishing to learn fully the welcome news, will not let him go till he have heard to his satisfaction. Thus he, unwilling, is present with the willing; but you will soon see him appear.

DEI. O Jove! who presidest over the "uncultured

^a The messenger is at all events abundantly candid in confessing his scurvy motive.

^b Uncultured in consequence of its being set apart and consecrated to the God. The epithet *ἄρρετος* may also be translated "undevastated," which bears in a similar way a reference to its sanctity, as being spared, on that account, by the enemy in their hostile incursions.

mead of Æta, thou hast bestowed on us, though late, the joy. Raise your acclaim, ye maids; both ye within the house, and ye without the court, since we now enjoy the eye of happy rumour, beaming unexpectedly upon me.

Cmo. Burst forth, ye palaces, with the shouts of joy round your hearths! Let the song of the bridegroom, and the mingled notes of the youths ascend! Celebrate, ye virgins, Apollo, our champion, the lord of the graceful quiver; and at the same time Pæan, Pæan; and invoke his sister Diana Ortygia, the huntress of the stag, the Goddess wreathed with fire, and her attendant nymphs. I am transported; nor will I disclaim the flute, oh sovereign of my soul! Lo! the thyrsus rouses me up; lo! it inspires me, now hurrying my steps into the Bacchic revelry. Io! Io! Pæan! Behold, behold, dear mistress, you may now see these things clearly before your face.

Dm. I see, dear virgins; nor has the watchfulness of my eyes deceived me so as not to see this band: and I bld the herald hail, though late appearing, if the tidings he brings be of joy.

LICHAS.

But well indeed have we come, and well, oh lady,

• Diana was represented in the ancient mysteries as bearing a torch in each hand. The epithet *ἀμφωρως* is generally supposed to have a reference to these insignia; but it may also be taken as descriptive of the splendour and brightness of the Goddess, in her character of Luna.

are we hailed according to the merit of our actions, for it is a matter of course that a man who prospers should gain good words.

DEI. O dearest of men, tell me first, what I most desire, if I shall embrace Hercules alive.

LI. I left him both in strength and life, blooming in health, and not oppressed with disease.

DEI. Where?—in his native or a foreign soil?—speak.

LI. There is a certain promontory of Euboea, where he is marking out altars, and sacrificing the fruits of his victories of Cænean⁴ Jove.

DEI. In performance of a vow? or on the injunction of some oracle?

LI. A vow,—when he took the country of these women you see before you, the devastated prey of his spear.

DEI. But who, by the Gods, are these? and whose are they? for they are the objects of pity, if misfortune do not deceive me.

LI. These, when he destroyed the city of Eurytus, he selected, a chosen possession for himself and the Gods.

DEI. Was it against this city that he was gone this vast and countless number of days?

LI. No; but for the principal part of the time he was detained in Lydia, as he himself says, not free, but sold. But there ought not, oh lady, to be any displeasure at a circumstance of which Jove may appear to

⁴ The name is derived from Cænæum, a promontory of Euboea, which was consecrated to this God.

have been the cause. For he, as he owns himself, being sold to Omphale, a barbarian, completed a year in her service^{*}: and he was thus stung by having this disgrace attached to him, that, laying an oath on himself, he swore that he would yet enslave, along with his wife and children, the man who brought this suffering home to him. Nor did he belie his word; but when he was purified[†], taking a foreign host, he goes to the city of Eurytus; for he accused him alone of mortals of being the author of this evil; who, when he came a guest to his house, being of old his friend, had much reviled him with words, and the malignity of his mind, saying, that though he bore in his hands the inevitable arrows, he was inferior to his children in the trial of archery: and he says that he, a slave, ought to be treated with blows by a freeman; and when he was heated with wine at the banquet, he drove him out. Being enraged at this treatment, when Iphitus[‡] afterwards came to the Tirynthian hill, following the traces of some mares that had left his pastures, then while he had his eye turned in one way, and his mind in another, he hurled him down from the summit of the towering steep[§]. But Jove, the Olympian king, father

* It is not on record in what way Omphale employed the services of Hercules, except that she used to make him take a distaff, and spin for her amusement. We must not suppose, however, that he had so far forgot his manhood as to submit to this degrading task at any other than those intervals when he was unfitted by exhaustion for more active exertion.

† When he had made expiation for the murder of Iphitus, by completing his year of bondage.

‡ One of the four sons of Eurytus.

§ This was a very blackguard piece of business on the part of Her-

of all, being enraged on account of this deed, sent him thence in slavery, nor brooked that he should slay Iphitus, alone of men, by guile. For had he openly assailed him, Jove would have forgiven him for justly vanquishing his opponent: for the Gods do not love injustice. But they who wantonly boasted with reviling tongue, are all the inhabitants of the shades, and their city is captive. But these virgins, whom you behold, having met with an unenviable life, from an high estate, come to you: for thus at least your husband enjoined, and I, being faithful to him, execute his command. And when he shall have offered the holy sacrifices to his father Jove for the capture of the city, expect him to come himself: for this, of all a long tale of happy tidings, is the sweetest word to hear.

CHO. Now, O queen, manifest joy accrues to you, both from what is present, and from what you have learnt by this speech.

DEI. And how should I not, when I hear of these prosperous fortunes of my husband, rejoice with all the just joy of my soul? There is strong necessity that my joy should keep pace with his success. Yet still fear dwells in those who consider things aright, lest he, who is in prosperity, should at some moment stumble in his course. For a powerful sentiment of

cules. It argues bad taste in the poet to introduce a story which tends so much to destroy our favourable impressions of his hero.

* "*Τὸν δὲ εὐνομήνῃ* recte vertit Brunckius: tamen inest his aliquis metus, si rem rite expendas. Quippe intelligitur prospera Herculis fortuna, neque, ut Hæpferus et Billerbeckius sibi persuaserant, ad puellas adstantes pertinet." *Erdfurt.*

compassion, my friends, has entered my bosom as I look on these ill-starred virgins, wandering in the land of strangers, afar from their homes, and bereft of their fathers, who in former days, perchance, were the offspring of high-born chiefs, but who now lead the life of slaves. O Jove, averter of my ills, may I never at any time see thee thus advancing against my children, nor, if thou wilt do aught, while I at least am yet alive! Thus am I moved by fear, beholding these captives. O unhappy in thy lot, who of youthful virgins art thou?—unmarried, or a mother? Yet, by your appearance, you are unacquainted with all this, but art one of noble birth. Lichas, of whom of mortals is this stranger the daughter? Who was the mother that bore her? Who was the father that begot her? Declare it. For I, on beholding her, have pitied her the most of these, in as much as she alone knows to feel for her situation.*

LI. What do I know? Why should you ask me? Perhaps the offspring of parents who there are not amongst the meanest.

DEI. Is she the daughter of Eurytus the king?

LI. I know not: for I did not make any great inquiries.

DEI. Nor have you learnt her name from some one of the companions of her way?

LI. By no means. I performed my task in silence.

* "Quod prudentiæ specimen ediderit Iole, ex contextu non patet; liberaque adeo conjectura lectori relinquitar, utrum lachrymis præsentis mali sensum testata sit, an vultu sereno et placido animi magnitudinem ostenderit." *Musgrave.*

DEI. But do you, unhappy maid, speak to me yourself: since it is a sort of misfortune not to know you, at least who you are.

LI. She will not now utter a word more than formerly, she who has yet spoken much or little; but, ever deploring the weight of her calamity, the wretched maid keeps shedding tears from the time that she left her wind-swept* country. This circumstance is unfortunate indeed, for herself at least, but it deserves pardon.

DEI. Let her therefore be indulged, and let her go within thus as is most agreeable to her, nor, in addition to her present evils, let her receive from me at least a double pain: for that which she already feels is enough. And now let us all go home, that you at least may hasten where you please, and I may put things within in proper order.

MESS. Here, at any rate, first wait for a little while, in order that you may learn apart from these, whom at least you conduct within; and of what you have heard nothing may be fully made acquainted, too, with all that is proper to know: for I have the full intelligence of these things.

DEI. What is it? Why do you stay my steps?

MESS. Standing still, listen: for neither did you for-

* "*Διΐσχυος, ventis perflatam, i. e. desertam, ut bene interpretatur Scholiastes.*" *Musgrave*. From this we must venture to dissent. The native city of Iole is mentioned, in another place, as "the lofty" *Æchalia*, which will sufficiently account for its being exposed to a little rough weather, without having recourse to the "interpretatio" of the Scholiast, or *Musgrave*, his approving ally.

merly^a hear my words in vain, nor do I think you will now.

DEI. Whether, in truth, shall I call those persons back again, or do you wish to speak to these virgins and to me?

MESS. To you and these there is no restriction, but suffer the others to remain away.

DEI. And in fact they are gone, and let your news be signified.

MESS. This man utters nothing of what he has just spoken according to the strictness of truth : but either now he is false, or formerly was present no true messenger.

DEI. What say you? Clearly deliver to me all that you have in your mind; for, as to what you have spoken, ignorance possesses me.

MESS. I heard this man saying, in the presence of many witnesses, that, for the sake of this virgin, Hercules both destroyed Eurytus and the lofty towers of Æchalia; and that love alone of the Gods had moved him to raise his spear in this war; not his adventures in Lydia, nor his service of toil with Omphale, nor the headlong death of Iphitus; [but love] which he now setting aside, contradicts his former statement. But when he did not persuade the father to give up his daughter that he might enjoy her secret embraces, having devised some slight ground of complaint and quarrel, he leads an expedition against the country of this damsel, in which he said that Eurytus was lord of the

^a This messenger is the same officious person who came before to announce the arrival of Lichas.

throne; and he slays the king her father, and has sacked the city. And he comes, O lady, as you see, sending her to this palace, not without design, nor as a slave; expect not this: nor is it likely since he hath been inflamed with desire. It seemed therefore good to me, oh queen, to disclose to you every thing which I have chanced to learn from the herald: and many in the middle of the Trachinian forum heard this at the same time equally with myself, so as to bring it home to him. But if I do not say what is agreeable I am sorry; yet still I have spoken the truth.

DEI. Ah unhappy me! in what circumstances am I placed? What secret bane have I received under my roof? O wretched woman that I am! Is she then of an obscure name, as he that conducted her swore, she so brightly beauteous both in face and form?

MÆSS. Being by birth the daughter of Eurytus, she was formerly called Iole, whose parents he could not tell, having, forsooth, made no inquiry.

CHOR. Let not all the wicked perish, but him who ever practises base fraud unworthy of his character.^b

DEI. What, ye women, ought to be done? for I am driven out of my mind by this present intelligence.

CHOR. Go and interrogate the man, since he will quickly tell the truth, if you appear inclined to question him by force.

DEI. Well, I go: for you do not advise without judgment.

^b The Chorus evidently utter this malediction to shew their indignation at the duplicity of Lichas, though they justly take the opportunity of having a slap at the master while they abuse the man.

CHO. But shall we remain? or what is it proper to do?

DEI. Remain; since this man, not summoned by my messengers, but of his own accord, is passing out of the house.

LI. What is it fitting, O lady, that I, returning, should say to Hercules? Inform me, since, as you see, I am going.

DEI. Do you, thus coming after so long a time, so quickly depart before we renew our conversation?

LI. If you wish to make any inquiry, I am present.

DEI. Do you deal in the honesty of truth?

LI. Great Jove be my witness in whatever at least I know.

DEI. Who, in truth, is the woman whom you come conducting?

LI. A woman of Eubœa: but from whom she is sprung I cannot tell.

MESS. Ho you, look this way: to whom do you think you speak?

LI. And you, for what purpose do you ask me this question?

MESS. Dare to answer, if you are wise, what I ask you.

LI. To Deianira the queen, daughter of Ceneus, and wife of Hercules, [if my sight deceive me not,] and my mistress.

MESS. This was the very thing I sought to learn from you. Do you acknowledge that this is your mistress?

LI. Yes; for she is so with just right.

MESS. What then? What punishment do you con-

sider yourself worthy to suffer, if you be found untrue to her ?

LI. How untrue ? What wiles are you attempting ?

MESS. None : you however are doing this in a very great degree.

LI. I go ; and I was a fool to listen so long to you.

MESS. Not at least before being shortly examined you shall make answer.

LI. Speak, if you wish, any thing ; for you are not much inclined to silence.

MESS. Do you know the captive whom you have brought to this palace ?

LI. I answer no. But why do you inquire ?

MESS. Did you not say that you were conducting Iole, the daughter of Eurytus, her whom you now look upon as unknown ?

LI. Amongst what sort of men, who, and whence coming, will bear witness to you that present he heard these words from me ?

MESS. Amongst many of the citizens. A great crowd in the middle of the Trachinian forum heard, full sure, these words from your mouth.

LI. Very true ; I said that I heard this at least. But it is not the same thing to state one's notion, and to maintain an assertion as correctly true.

MESS. What notion ? Did not you, speaking under an oath, declare that you brought this damsel as a wife for Hercules ?

LI. I talk of a wife ! Tell me, my dear mistress, by the Gods, who in the world is this stranger ?

MESS. One who present heard you assert, that all

the city was subdued through love of this woman, and that the Lydian dame was not the cause of its destruction, but the love of Iole bursting forth.*

LI. Let this man, O queen, begone : for to babble with a madman is not the part of the wise.

DEI. Do not, by Jove, who rolls his thunders along the summits of Æta's forests, falsify thy tale ; for thou wilt not tell it to a woman of a base spirit, nor one who does not know the disposition of men, that it is not by nature formed to take pleasure always in the same things. Whoever indeed resists love, like a pugilist, hand to hand, is unwise. For Love rules even the Gods as he pleases, and my heart at least ; and why not another's, such at any rate as mine ? So that if I blame my husband, possessed by this disease, or this maiden, the cause of no dishonour nor evil to me, I am mad in the extreme. It is not so. But, if learning it from him, you feign this tale, you learn no good instruction ; and if you thus teach yourself, when you wish to be good, you shall be proved to be bad. But speak the whole truth : since for a free-man to be called a liar is a disgraceful stain attaching to his character. Nor is it possible that you should escape detection ; for there are many to whom you have spoken who will repeat your words to me. And if you fear indeed, your fears are foolish ; since not to know it might give me pain ; but as to knowing it, where is the harm ? Has not Hercules, one husband,

* Musgrave proposes, in place of *φανίς*, to read *σφαλίς*, *frustratus*, which would be a decided improvement, were there any good authority for its adoption.

already married several other wives ?^d and no one of them has yet heard from me, at least, evil word or reproach ; nor shall she, even though he be deeply imbued with her love, since I pitied her most of all when I looked on her, because her beauty has been the ruin of her life, and she, in her unhappy fate, has unwillingly brought to destruction and slavery her native land. But let these things speed on with propitious gales ; and I desire you to be deceitful to others, but never to be guilty of falsehood to me.

CHO. Obey this dame, recommending what is good, and you shall afterwards not blame your compliance, and shall acquire my gratitude.

LI. But, O my dear mistress, since I perceive you, a mortal, have thoughts becoming a mortal, and are not void of judgment, I will tell you the whole truth, nor conceal aught. For the fact is so as he asserts. A vehement passion for this damsel once on a time thrilled through Hercules, and on her account was her native Æchalia, in wide destruction, laid low by the spear. And these circumstances, for it is proper to tell that which is for his part, he neither bade me keep close, nor ever denied ; but I myself, O queen, fearing lest I should pain your breast by these tidings, was guilty of this error, if in aught you deem it an error. And now, since you know all the story, both for his sake and your own equally, bear this woman with patience, and resolve to confirm the words which

^d Such were Megara, Auge, and Astydameia ; not to mention the fifty virgins, whom, to crown his labours, he took to wife in one night.

you have spoken concerning her. For he who bore the palm in every thing else by his valour, is no match at all for his love of this maid.

DEI. But thus both my sentiments incline so as to do these things, and I will not bring on myself a voluntary malady, maintaining an unequal contest with the Gods. But let us go within the palace, that you may both hear the answers I charge you, and take the gifts which it behoves us to prepare, in suitable return to his gifts : for it were not right that you, who came with such a great train, should return empty-handed.

CHORUS.

Venus ever triumphs in a certain mighty power of victory ; and the loves of the Gods indeed I omit ; nor do I sing how she beguiled the son of Saturn ; nor Pluto, the king of night ; nor Neptune, the shaker of the earth. But to gain Deianira as a bride, certain suitors, of giant limbs, entered the lists before the nuptials,* and went through the strife of a battle, resounding with blows and enveloped in dust. The one indeed was the potent river, in the quadruped form of a bull, with towering horns,† Achelœus from the

* “ Πρὸ γάμων. Frigidissimum foret ante nuptias nec πρὸ pro πρὶ accipi sinit aut versus superior, aut Græcorum usus.” *Musgrave*.

“ Πρὸ γάμων est, pro potiundis nuptiis.” *Erdfurt*.

† The appearance of Achelœus with horns looks as if he had been already married, instead of merely coming to woo. Perhaps the God of the river designed it as a practical pleasantry on the fate he anticipated in case of his proving the successful suitor.

Œniada; and the other came from Bacchic Thebes, lightly wielding his unbent bow, and shafts, and club, the son of Jove; who then, burning for her embrace, rushed to the struggle. And the beauteous Venus,* alone present in the midst, presides o'er the fray. Then was there the din of blows, and of the bow, and the mingling crash of the horns of the bull; then were there the locked intertwinings of wrestling, and the deadly blows of the forehead, and groans[†] from both. And the soft and beauteous nymph sat on a conspicuous mound, awaiting him who should be her spouse; [with all a mother's feelings I tell the tale][‡] and her eye that fired the contest, sorrowfully expected its issue; and away from her mother she straightway departed, like some young deserted heifer.

Der. Whilst, my friends, the stranger is conversing with the captive virgins, as about to depart, I have, in the meantime, privily come without the gates to you, partly to explain to you what I have devised

* "Non intelligendum de Dea Paphia, quæ nequæ ἑλπίστει dici solet, neque coram certamini interfuisse a mythologia traditur. Est igitur Κίρως nihil aliud quam τὴν, connubium sive conjux. Totum locum sic interpretor: sola autem puella formosa in medio assidens certamini præerat: i. e. nullius βεβήκωσιν jussu, sed puellæ duntaxat amore incitati, in arenam descendebant." *Musgrave.*

† "Στόμας. Cicero hanc vocem in quæst. Tusc. II. 23. illustrat: pugiles vero, ait, quum feriunt adversarium, in jactandis cæstibus *ingemiscunt*, non quod doleant animove succumbant, sed quod profunda voce omne corpus intenditur venitque plaga vehementior. Idem faciunt athletæ." *Billerbeck.*

‡ Or, "I tell the tale as her mother told it to me."

with my hands, and partly to bewail, along with you, the sufferings I endure. For I am of opinion that I have received this captive, no longer a maiden, but a wife, as a mariner his freight, so I this merchandise to the ruin of my peace: and now we two, beneath one coverlet, await his embrace. Such a reward has Hercules, that was called my faithful and good husband, sent me in return for the care with which I watched over his house for so long a time. But I indeed do not know how to be angry with him, so oft afflicted with this disease: and yet again to dwell in the house along with her, and share the same marriage, what woman could endure? ^k For I see her youth indeed advancing to ripeness, and mine decaying; from the former of which the eye is wont to cull flowers, but from the latter to turn away the steps. This therefore I dread, lest Hercules should be called indeed my husband, but be the husband of the younger wife. But enough; for it is not proper, as I said, for a woman, possessed of prudence, to give way to anger; but in what way I gain a release from my troubles, that I will explain to you. I had a gift once on a time of old bestowed by an ancient Centaur, concealed in a brazen urn; which, while yet a girl, I took from the death-wound of the shaggy-bosomed Nessus, who, for hire, bore mortals in his arms over the deep flow of the river Evenus, neither plying with the speeding oar, nor with the sails of a bark.

^k O quam cruentus feminas stimulat dolor,
Cum patuit una pellici et auptæ domus.

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He, bearing me also on his shoulders, when first unattended by my father's train, I followed Hercules, as he reached the middle of the stream, touched me with lewd hands ; but I screamed out ; and the son of Jove immediately turning, sent from his hands 'a winged arrow ; and through his chest, even into the lungs, it whizzed. And these were the words that the dying Centaur spoke : " Daughter of aged Œneus, such profit shall you derive, if you obey me, from this passage, because you are the last I bear across the river : for if you take with your hands the curdled gore from my wound, where the monstrous Hydra of Lerna has steeped the arrow with its black venom, this will prove to you a soothing charm over the mind of Hercules, so that he shall not, looking on any woman, feel more affection for her than for you." Revolving, my friends, this counsel in my mind, (for in the house, after his death, it remained carefully shut up,) I have steeped this garment, applying whatever he, while alive, commanded ; and the task is completed. But may I neither know nor learn the deeds of evil daring, and those women who attempt them, I hate : yet if we can any how get the better of this damsel by philtres and soothing charms essayed on Hercules, this plan has been well contrived, unless I appear to you to make a vain attempt ; but if I do, it shall be desisted from.

CHO. But if there be any faith in the trial, you seem to us not to have determined amiss.

DEI. Thus at least my faith rests, so that it is accompanied, indeed, by my opinion of success ; but I have never yet made acquaintance with the experiment.

CHO. But it is necessary to obtain the knowledge by doing the action, since, though you seem to have, you cannot have, the knowledge, without making the trial.

DEI. But we shall soon know : for I see the herald already without the gates ; and he will quickly go. Only let our secret be faithfully preserved by you ; for though you do what is base in the dark, you will never fall into shame.

LI. What is to be done ? tell me, O daughter of Ceneus, since we are already tardy by long delay.

DEI. But I am equally impatient as you, (the while you are talking to these strangers within,) that you bear for me this well-woven robe, a gift to that hero from my hand. And, presenting it, direct him that no one of mortals before him put it on his person, nor that ray of the sun behold it, nor sacred shrine, nor flame from the hearth, before that, standing conspicuous, he display it bright to the Gods, on some day marked by the sacrifice of bulls. For thus I vowed, if I ever should see him safe at home, or hear of his return, that with full ritual observance I would deck him in this vest, and exhibit him to the Gods, a new sacrificer in a new garment. And of this you shall bear to him a token, which he will easily recognise, when he casts his eye on this seal. But go ; and first observe this rule, not to desire, being a messenger, to do more than you are required ; and in the next place, act so that his favour towards you, uniting with mine, instead of single, may become double.

LI. But, if I faithfully exercise this art of Hermes, I will not be guilty of any failure in your trust, so as not bearing this vessel, to shew it him in its present

state, and to add faithfully the words which you have spoken.

DEI. You may now, if you choose, depart : for you also know of the affairs in the house, in what state they are.

LI. I both know, and I will report, that they are well.

DEI. And you know too, having seen my reception of the stranger, that I welcomed her in a friendly manner.

LI. So that my heart was amazed with joy.

DEI. What else indeed should you relate ? for I fear lest you first tell my longing desire for him, before you know if the affection there be mutual.

CHORUS.

O ye who dwell by the warm baths bordering on the station of the ships and rocks of the sea ; and ye by the cliffs of *Æta*, and the middle of the *Melian* lake, and the shore of the virgin with golden shaft, where the *Pylian* assemblies of the *Greeks* convene, the flute, with its beauteous notes, ere long returns to you, breathing forth no unpleasing melody, but such as may challenge the lyre of the divine muse. For the son of *Jove* and *Alcmena*, bearing the spoils of every virtue, hies him home ; whom, absent from his country and afar over the sea, we waited for, all ignorant of his fate, through the full space of twelve long months. And his beloved spouse in misery, in saddest misery at heart, ever drenched with tears, kept pining away :—but now hath *Mars*, being maddened by desire, brought to a close our day of sorrow. Let him come ! let him

come! let not the bark that bears him on with many an oar stop in its course, before that he effect his way to this city, having left the altar of the island where he is said to be sacrificing; whence let him hasten through the whole day, being wrapt in the robe deeply imbued with persuasion, according as the Centaur directed.

DEI. How I fear, O virgins, lest all that I have just done, be done by me beyond what is right.

CHO. O Deianira, daughter of Ceneus, what has happened?

DEI. I know not: but I fear lest I shall quickly appear to have wrought a great evil from the persuasion of good hope.

CHO. Surely it cannot be any thing about your gifts to Hercules?

DEI. Yes, most particularly; so that I would never advise any one to act with promptness in an uncertain event.

CHO. Tell us, if it may be told, from what circumstance your fears arise.

DEI. A circumstance has occurred, of such a nature as I shall describe; an unexpected marvel, ye damsels, for you to hear. For that, with which I was just anointing the tunic,¹ the white wool from the snowy fleece of the sheep, that has disappeared, consumed by none of the domestics, but corroded by itself, it wastes away, and smoulders down the surface of the slab.

¹ “Ἐνδύτης πίπλον, i. e. χιτῶνα, *tunicam, vestem interiorem*. Hæ enim ἐνδύοντο, superiores (χλαῖναι sc. χλαμύδεις, et hujusmodi aliæ) περιβάλλοντο.” Musgrave.

“Or, “smooth stone,” where she had laid out the wool to dry.

But that you may know the whole way in which this was done, I will extend my narration to greater length. For of those charges with which the wild Centaur, while anguished by the bitter barb in his side, had tutored me, I let slip not one, but preserved them like an indelible writing on a brazen tablet. And thus it was commanded me, and I obeyed it, that I should preserve this drug unexposed to the fire, and untouched by the warm sun-beam in close recesses, until I should somewhere apply it in fresh unction. And this I did: and now, when the operation was to be tried, I secretly, within the walls of the house, spread it on the garment with a lock of wool, having drawn it from the fleece of a domesticated sheep; and folding up the gift, I placed it, as you saw, in a hollow chest secure from the beams of the sun. But, going within, I see a sight that cannot be described, and impossible for mortal to conceive. For I chanced to throw the wool torn from the sheep, with which I was besmearing the robe, into the blaze of mid-day, the rays of the sun; and as it became warm, it all melts into nothing, and fritters away on the ground, chiefly resembling, in appearance, the dust from the saw, should you chance to see it, in the cutting of wood. In this way it lay fallen; and from the ground where it was spread out, there boil up gouts of foam, like as when the rich juice of mellow Autumn is poured on the earth from the vine of Bacchus. So that I, wretched, do not know to what thoughts to turn: and I see that I have wrought a dreadful deed. For whence at all, and in return for what, should the dying Centaur do an act of kindness to me, for whom he perished? It cannot be

so : but wishing to destroy him whose shaft pierced him, he beguiled me ; of which I acquire the knowledge too late, when it is no longer of avail. For I alone, if I am not deceived in my mind, I, wretched woman, shall be the cause of his death. For I know that the arrow that gave the wound was fatal even to the divine Chiron,^a and destroys every living thing it touches : and how shall not the black venom of the gore, issuing from the wound of the Centaur, slay also Hercules ? In my opinion, too sure it will. And yet I am determined, if he fall, that at the same moment I too die along with him : for to live with the stain of infamy is not to be endured by me, who preferred to every thing else a nature abhorrent of baseness.

CHO. It follows, of course, that there should be horror at dreadful deeds ; but it is not right to condemn our hopes before the event.

DEI. In dishonourable designs there is no hope, which may conciliate any confidence.

CHO. But for those who fall into involuntary error, there is a softening of anger, which it is fitting you should meet.

DEI. Such comfort may he suggest, who does not share in the evil ; but to whom there is at home no grief ?^o

^a This story is to be found at length in Ovid's *Fasti*, Book V. 379.

^o "Facile omnes, cum valemus, recta consilia segrotis damus :
Tu, si hic sis, aliter sentias."

TRACHT. ANDR. II. i. 9.

CHO. It were as well for you to suppress in silence the rest of your words, except you are going to disclose something to your son; for he is present who formerly went away in search of his father.

HYL.^P O mother! how of three things I would choose one, either that you were dead, or that if you lived you were called the mother of some other son, or from some whence might acquire better feelings than those you now possess.

DEI. What deed of mine, my son, excites this abhorrence?

HYL. Know that you have this day slain your husband, and my father.

DEI. Woe is me! what tale, my son, do you bear?

HYL. The tale of that which it is impossible can be undone; for who is able to uncreate that which has once been born?

DEI. What say you, my son? From what mortal having gained this information, do you assert that I have done such a hateful deed?

HYL. I myself witnessed, with my eyes, the grievous sufferings of my father, and I did not hear it by report.

DEI. And where did you meet with him, and were present by his side?

HYL. If it is requisite you should know, it behoves me to tell you all. When he departed, after having destroyed the renowned city of Eurytus, bearing with

^P Hyllus has been away at Cænæum, and back again, during an hour's conversation between his mother and the Chorus. This is a violation of the unity of time with a vengeance.

him the trophies and first fruits of victory ; there is a certain sea-washed shore of Eubœa, called the Cenæan promontory, where he consecrates to his father Jove altars and the foliage of a sacred grove : there I, with longing joy, first beheld him. And when he was about to offer up the sacrifice of many victims, there came a herald from home, his servant Lichas, bearing your gift, the deadly garment, which he putting on as you directed, slays twelve bulls, of perfect shape, the first-fruits of his spoils ; but he brought altogether to the altar a mingled herd of an hundred cattle. And at first indeed the wretched man, rejoicing in his robe and ornaments, addressed his vows with a cheerful mind : but when the bloody flame blazed forth from the sacred offerings and oily wood, sweat burst out on his skin, and the tunic clung to his body, closely glued, as if by some artificer's hand, to every limb ; and convulsive wrenching of the bones succeeded. Then, as the envenomed gore of the accursed Hydra revelled in his veins, he called on the unfortunate Lichas, him who had no share in your guilt, by what treachery he had brought the garment : and he, ill-starred wretch, all-ignorant, said it was the gift of you alone, as it had been sent. And Hercules, as he heard these words, and the agonizing pangs assailed his lungs, seizing him by the foot, where the ankle bends, dashes him on a rock, washed all around by the sea ; and the white brains gush out from the middle of the head, the blood being scattered around, and the hair along with it. And all the people shouted aloud with lamentation, the hero being afflicted with this pest, and the herald being slain ; but no one dared to ap-

proach Héracles. For he was racked by the pain, both lying on the ground and standing up, shouting and shrieking : and the rocks around resounded, the mountain headlands of the Locrians, and the promontories of Eubœa. But when he grew faint, oft dashing himself, the wretched man, on the ground, and howling with loud clamour, reviling the evil nuptials of your unhappy couch, and the alliance of Cæneus, how he had contracted it to the ruin of his life, then raising his distorted eyes from the mist settling over them, he saw me shedding tears amidst the numerous crowd, and looking on me, he calls me ; “ O my son, come hither, do not fly my miseries, not even though it be necessary for you to die along with me, your dying father : but bear me away, and by all means, if possible, place me there, where no one of mortals shall behold me ; and if you feel pity, transport me, at least, from this land^a with all speed, nor let me die here.” When he had urged this request, we placed him in the middle of a ship, and brought him, bellowing in agony, with difficulty to these shores ; and you will presently see him, either alive or newly dead. In such devices and deeds against my father, O mother, have you been detected, for which may penal Justice, and the avenging Fury re-

^a “ Maxime omnium cupiebat Hercules, ut solus, nemine mortaliū præsente, mortem obiret : proximum ab eo erat, ut ex Eubœa saltem ante mortem aveheretur, ne Æchaliensibus gaudii materiem præberet, ut bene judicat Scholiastes. Hoc igitur impensius quam alterum rogat ; *At si misericordia tangeris saltem tu me ex hac regione deportari cura.*” Musgrave.

pay you : this, if it be lawful at least, I imprecate : but it is lawful, since you towards me have cast away all law, having slain a hero the noblest of all on earth, such another as you shall never behold.

CHO. Why do you depart in silence ? Do you not know that by preserving silence you confirm the charge of your accuser ?

HYL. Suffer her to go ; may there be a fair wind to her departing to a distance from my sight. For why is it necessary to cherish the empty sound of a mother's name, since she in nothing acts like a mother ? But let her go where she chooses, and the delight that she has afforded my father, that same may she herself enjoy.

CHORUS.

Behold, ye virgins, how quickly hath advanced to its completion, the heaven-sent decree of ancient oracular prescience, which announced, that when the twelfth year should arrive at its close, in the fulness of months, there should ensue a respite from his toils, to Jove's genuine son ; and, without swerving, it is speeding on this doom in its course. For how can he, who beholds not the light, endure the servitude of toil, at least any longer in death ? For if resistless jealousy, working by guile, envenom him with the bloody cloud of the Centaur ; in his side the poison rankling, which death and the spotted serpent gave birth to ; how shall he behold another day than the present, being racked by the horrible spectre of the Hydra ? and, at the same time, the deadly pangs, produced by the guileful words of the dark and shaggy

Nessus, torture him with their burning throbs. Wherefore she, a wretched woman, seeing the great and sudden bane of new nuptials hastening to the house, did not perceive that the counsel proceeded from a deceitful purpose, for a reconciliation in death. Sure, somewhere in misery, she is groaning; sure somewhere she is shedding the fresh dew of fast-falling tears. But his approaching death points the way^{*} to a secret and deep calamity. The fount of tears hath burst forth. The disease envelopes him: oh, ye Gods, such a piteous suffering as never befel the illustrious Hercules from his enemies. Oh, woe for the black point of his champion spear, which then didst bring his new-won bride from lofty Æchalia! But Venus, executing her ministry in silence, hath clearly appeared the cause of all.

SEMICHŌ. Whether am I deceived, or do I hear some lamentation newly bursting forth in the house? What shall I say?

SEMICHŌ. Some one utters within no doubtful wail, but one of deep sorrow; and something new happens to the house.

SEMICHŌ. But do you perceive the old woman, how, in an unusual way, and with contracted brow, she comes to us, about to signify some intelligence?

NURSE.

O virgins, how has that gift which was sent to Hercules been the beginning to us of no small evils!

* Implying, that in case of the death of Hercules, Deianira would not survive him.

CHO. What new event, old woman, do you tell?

NUR. Deianira has gone the last way of all, without moving the foot.

CHO. Surely not as dead?

NUR. You have heard all.

CHO. Is the wretched woman dead?

NUR. You hear it a second time.

CHO. Wretched, ruined woman! in what way do you say that she died?

NUR. In a most miserable way, as regards at least the deed.

CHO. Tell, oh woman, what death she met.

NUR. She destroyed herself.

CHO. What rage or what madness urged her?

NUR. The point of a cruel weapon dispatched her.

CHO. How did she contrive alone to effect death in addition to death?

NUR. By the wound of the mournful steel.

CHO. Did you look, oh wretched woman, on this outrage?

NUR. I looked on, as being in truth near her side.

CHO. What was it? how?—quick declare.

NUR. She herself by her own hand does the deed.

CHO. What do you say?

NUR. That which is certain.

CHO. This new bride has produced a mighty Fury to this house.

NUR. Too sure, indeed; but still more, if, present and near, you had beheld what she did, would you have deeply pitied her.

CHO. And did any woman's hand dare to do these deeds?

NUR. Yes—and terribly: but you shall learn the circumstances, so as to agree with me. When she entered by herself within the palace, and saw her son in the court, spreading garments over the hollow litter, in order that he might return to meet his father, concealing herself where none should see her, she shrieked out, as she fell before the altars, that she had become desolate, and wept when she touched any of the instruments which, wretched woman! she was wont to use: and roaming here and there through the palace, if she chanced to see the person of some loved domestic, the unhappy woman wept at the sight, herself arraigning her own fortune, and her sterile existence for the future. But when she desisted from these complaints, I see her suddenly rushing to the chamber of Hercules; and, concealed in the shade, I watched her with secret eye; and I behold her casting the outspread garments on the couch of Hercules. But when she had finished this task, leaping up, she sate down in the middle of the bed, and giving vent to the warm fountains of tears, spoke: “O bed, and scene of my nuptial joys, for the future now farewell, since you shall never again receive me to repose on this couch.” Having spoken these words, she unfastens with quick hand her robe, where the clasp, wrought in gold, shone in front of the breast, and she laid bare all her side and her left shoulder. And I, running as fast as I was able, tell to her son the deeds she devised: and whilst we hasten thither and hither, we see her wounded in the side, beneath the liver and the heart, by the double-edged sword. But her son, when he beheld her, shrieked; for the wretched youth perceived that she

had put her hand to this deed in anger, being too late informed of what had taken place at home,—how she unwillingly had done this at the instigation of the Centaur. Hereupon, her unhappy son wailing for her, neither omitted aught of lamentation, nor ceased to bestow kisses on her lips, but stretching himself out by her side, he lay deeply mourning that he had rashly wounded her with a cruel accusation,—and weeping, because that he should be at once deprived of two, his father and his mother. Such is the state of circumstances here: so that if any one count on two days or more, he is a fool; for there is not at least a to-morrow before he pass without misfortune the present day.

CHORUS.

Over which shall I first raise my lamentation? It is difficult for me, a wretched being, to decide which has been consummated in most utter ruin. The one, indeed, we at present behold in the palace, and the other we are on the eve of expectation of beholding: and it is the same thing to have and to be about to have. Oh that some gale of wind, blowing in favourable direction from the hearth of the house, would bear me away from this spot, that I may not die in dismay as soon as I once behold the valiant son of Jove; since in incurable pain, they say he is advancing to the palace, an object of marvellous horror. In near, therefore, and no distant anticipation, have I mourned like the nightingale of plaintive note; for here comes the attendant procession of strangers. Where are they bearing him? As if taking care of a friend, each lifts his

slow and noiseless steps. Alas! alas! alas! he, speechless, is borne along. Whether must we deem him dead or asleep?

HYL. Woe is me for thee, oh father! woe is me unhappy for thee! What shall I do? What counsel shall I take? Woe is me!

OLD MAN.

Peace, my son; do not awaken the fell pangs of your maddened father; [for though thus sunk down, he lives;] but compress with your teeth your lips.

HYL. How say you, old man,—does he live?

O. M. Beware, my son, lest you awake him, now enthralled by sleep, and rouse him up, and again kindle the fury of his dire disease.

HYL. But my mind has become frenzied to a degree intolerable to me a wretched mortal.

HERCULES.

O Jove! to what region have I come? Amongst what mortals do I lie tortured by these never-ceasing pains? Woe is me, for my misery! The accursed pest again devours me! Alas!

O. M. Do you not perceive how much better it would have been to bury your words in silence, and not dispel sleep from his temples and eyelids?

HYL. But I am not able to be silent, beholding this calamity.

HER. O sacred altars, founded on Cænæum, what a return for what splendid sacrifices have ye made to me, a wretched man! O Jove, what a disgrace thou hast brought on me!—a disgrace such as I would that I, in

my misery, had never beheld with my eyes,—this unappeasable fury of madness they must look on! What enchanter is there, or what skilful possessor of the healing art, who, without the aid of Jove, shall lull to peace this pest? Oh that, though far off, I might behold this miracle! Alas! alas! suffer me, suffer me, an unhappy-mortal, to repose in quiet. Where do you touch me? Where do you lay me? You will kill me! you will kill me! You have awakened the pangs that slumbered. That touch has pained me: my disease again comes on. Where are ye, oh ye most unjust men of all the Greeks; for whom I oft, destroying monsters in the sea and in all the forests, exposed my life?—and now against me, in this malady, no one will turn either fire or a friendly sword! alas! alas! nor hastening, is willing to cut off my head, and end my wretched life! Alas! Alas!

O. M. O son of the hero! this task has become too great for my strength: but do you assist, for you have a clearer eye than me to discern what will aid him.

HYL. I indeed lend my hand: but it is impossible for me, either from my own, or from foreign resources, to allay the tortures of his life. Jove alone possesses the remedy.

HER. O my son! my son! where at all are you? Here, here, taking hold of me, raise me up. Alas! alas! oh my sad fortune! It bursts on me again, it bursts on me, the wretched ruin of my life, the immediate fell disease. O Pallas, again it tortures me. Take compassion, O my son, on your father, and, drawing an innocent sword, strike me beneath the throat. O heal the agonies with which your impious

mother has maddened me; whom may I behold perishing thus, even thus as she has destroyed me. O brother of Jove, dear Pluto, lull me, O lull me to sleep, ending, by a speedy fate, my wretched existence.

CHO. I have shuddered, my friends, hearing by what sufferings our king, mighty as he is, is persecuted.

HER. Oh, I that have toiled with my hands and with my shoulders in many a daring and unutterable deed; and never yet has the spouse of Jove presented to me such an evil, nor Eurystheus, my hated enemy, as this net, woven by the Furies, by which I die, which the treacherous daughter of Ceneus has affixed to my shoulders. For, glued to my sides, it has gnawed away my outward flesh, and clinging within it drains the arteries of my lungs; and it has already drank up my discoloured blood, and I am consumed through my whole frame, bound in these inexplicable fetters. This, neither the martial array on the plains, nor the earth-born host of the giants, nor the might of monsters, nor Greek, nor barbarian, nor all the countries which, clearing from their pests, I penetrated, ever effected: but a woman, being of a feminine, not a masculine nature, by herself, and without the aid of the sword, has destroyed me. O my son, prove that you have been born my genuine son, and do not pay too much reverence to the name of a mother: taking your mother by force from the house, give her into my hands, that I may clearly know whether you will more pity her fate than mine, when you see her mangled body punished with justice. Come, my son, dare this deed, and pity me, the object of pity to many, who, like a girl, have

howled and wept : and this no mortal can say that he ever saw me do before ; but without a groan I met my misfortunes. Now, in place of such a stern character, I am found to be a weak woman. Approaching now, stand near your father, and see by the operation of what a calamity I endure these sufferings : for I will shew them uncovered. Lo ! here behold ye all this wretched body, look on me, an ill-fated mortal, in what a pitiable condition I am ! Ah ! ah ! woe is me ! alas ! alas ! The convulsion of my agony is again burning ; again it thrills through my sides, nor do the gnawings of the wretched disease appear likely to leave me at rest. O king Pluto, receive me ! O lightning of Jove, strike me ! Brandish, O monarch of the sky ; hurl, O father, the bolt of thy thunder ! For it revels on me again ; it has burst out, it has rushed forth upon me. O shoulders and breast ! O my dear arms ! are ye the same that once slew by your might the lion that dwelt in Nemea, scourge of the shepherds, a huge and terrific monster ; and the Hydra of Lerna ; and the unapproachable host of Centaurs, partaking of two natures, insolent, lawless, and surpassing in might ; and the Erymanthian bear ; and below the earth, the triple-headed dog of Orcus, a monster unvanquished in fight, offspring of the horrid Echidna ; and the dragon that guarded the golden apples in the world's remotest regions ? And a thousand other toils I essayed, and no one ever erected a trophy in triumph over my might. But now, thus disjointed and torn to pieces, I, wretched, am the prey of this blind pestilence ; I, who was said to have sprung from a mother the noblest of all ; I, who was pronounced in Heaven

the son of Jove. But be well assured of this at least, that even though I am nothing, and unable to move, I will even from such feeble strength punish her who did this deed. Would that she might only come, that by what she experienced, she might be able to announce to all, that both in my life and death, I took vengeance on the wicked.

CHO. O wretched Greece ! what a sorrow I foresee will be yours, if at least you be deprived of this hero.

HYL. Since, father, you give me leave to reply to you, although in pain, listen to me in silence ; for I shall ask of you what it is right to obtain. Give yourself up to me, but not with feelings smarting under the vehemence of anger ; for you would not thus be able to perceive how in some things you vainly desire to feel pleasure, and how in others you are as vainly pained.

HER. Speak what you wish, and have done ; since I, in my malady, understand none of those things which you already have been refining on.

HYL. I come to tell of my mother, in what circumstances she now is placed, and in what she sinned against her will.

HER. O, basest wretch ! have you made mention of the mother that slew your father, in the expectation that I would listen ?

HYL. For the case is such that is not proper for me to be silent.

HER. No, in truth, not that the guilt was first committed by her.

HYL. But you will not say so of the things she has this day done.

HER. Speak : but beware, lest you appear to have been born of a base spirit.

HYL. I speak : she has just died by recent slaughter.

HER. By whose hand ? thou hast falsely announced this portent.

HYL. By her own, no stranger's hand.

HER. Alas ! before, as was fitting, she perished by my hand.

HYL. Even your wrath would be turned away if you knew the whole.

HER. You have begun a dreadful tale ; but declare why you thus think.

HYL. She erred in the whole business, desiring what is good.

HER. Did she do what is good, O wretch, in murdering your father ?

HYL. For, thinking to apply a love charm to you, when she saw the new marriage within, she failed in her purpose.

HER. Who, of the Trachinians, is so skilled in charms ?

HYL. Nessus, the Centaur of old, persuaded her to inflame your desire by this philtre.

HER. Woe, woe is me unhappy ! I, wretched, am gone. I am destroyed, I am destroyed ; there exists no longer to me the light of day. Woe is me ! I perceive to what point of calamity I am reduced. Go, my son ; for to you there is no longer a father ; summon to me all the offspring of your brothers, and

summon the wretched Alcmena, in vain the spouse of Jove, that ye may hear, from my lips, the final prediction of oracles, as far as I know.

HYL. But your mother is not here : for she is gone to Tiryns, by the sea shore, to fix her dwelling there ; and of your children, taking some with her, she herself rears them, and others of them, you are to be informed, are dwelling in the city of Thebe. But we, O father, as many as are present, if it be necessary to do any thing, when we hear it, will render the service.

HBR. Do you then hear what is to be done ; and you have arrived at that point where you shall shew, being what sort of man, you are called my son. For it was predicted to me, of old, by my father, that I should not die by any living enemy, but by one who, departed from life, had his dwelling in the shades. This savage Centaur, therefore, according to the divine annunciation, though in death, destroys my life. And I will shew you new oracles, harmonizing with those of ancient date, and having a corresponding issue ; which, entering the grove of the Selli, whose home is the mountain, and whose couch the ground, I wrote down as they were delivered from the vocal oak, inspired by my father. Its voice announced to me, that at this time now actually present, there would be consummated to me a release from the toils imposed on me ; and I deemed that I should live in prosperity : but this signified nothing else but that I should die. For to the dead no toil arises. Since then, my son, the issue of these prophecies is clear ; it behoves you again to prove an ally to me, and not to wait for my mouth to

urge you, but yielding, of your own accord, to assist me, having discovered the best of laws, obedience to a father.

HYL. I am alarmed, O my father, at hearing an address of such a nature; but I will obey you in what seems good to you.

HER. First give me your right hand.

HYL. For what pledge do you make this eager request?

HER. Will you not quickly extend your hand, and not prove disobedient to me?

HYL. Lo, I extend it, and no objection shall be made by me.

HER. Swear now by the head of Jove, my father.

HYL. That I will do what?—and this oath shall be pronounced.

HER. That you will perform the deed enjoined by me.

HYL. I swear; calling Jove to witness.

HER. If you transgress your oath, pray that you may receive punishment.

HYL. I shall not receive it; for I will do what you command; yet still I imprecate the curse.

HER. Knowest thou, then, the highest cliff of Æta, sacred to Jove?

HYL. I know it, having often, as a sacrificer, at least, stood on its summit.

HER. Thither it is now fitting that you bear my body, with your own hands, and with the aid of such friends as you choose; and having cut down many a bough of the deep-rooted oak, and many a trunk of the male wild olive, cast my body on the pile; and having taken the blazing pitchy torch, set it on fire.

But let neither groan nor tear have vent ; but without lamentation or weeping, if you are the son of this man, fulfil your task. But if you do not, I await you, and even though I be below the earth, you shall ever be loaded with my curses.

HY. Oh me! my father, what words hast thou uttered? to what deeds dost thou compel me?

HER. What must be done: if not, be the son of some other, nor be called my son any longer.

HYL. Woe is me! still more again. To what a deed, oh father, do you execute me, to become your murderer and executioner?

HER. No, in truth, I do not; but to be the healer, and only physician, of the evils I suffer.

HYL. But how shall I heal your body by consuming it in the flames?

HER. If you shrink from this, perform at least the rest.

HYL. There shall be no unwillingness at least to bear you.

HER. Will you also pile up, in sufficient quantity, the pyre I have described?

HYL. In so far at least as I am able, so that I do not touch the fire with my own hand. But I will do the other things, and my part shall not be behind.

HER. Well, this will do. But, in addition to these great requests, grant me a small favour.

HYL. Even though it be very great, it shall be rendered.

HER. Knowest thou, in sooth, the daughter of Eurytus?

HYL. You mean Iole, if I conjecture aright.

HER. You are right. This charge, my son, I lay on you : if you wish, in remembrance of the oaths pledged to your father, to act the part of a pious son after my death, take love to your wife, nor be disobedient to my commands. Let no other man but you obtain possession of her who once lay by my side : but do you yourself, my son, make the alliance of these nuptials. Obey me ; for having been obedient to me in great matters, to disobey me in small does away with the former favour.

HYL. Ah me ! it is wrong to give way to anger against one in this distress ; but yet who could endure to see him have sentiments like these ?

HER. Do you murmur, as about to refuse to do any of the things I request ?

HYL. But who would ever, since she alone was the cause of my mother's death, and to you also of the state to which you are reduced ; who, I say, that is not persecuted to madness by the Furies, would choose her for a wife ? It is better for me, oh father, to die than to dwell with those who are most hateful to my soul.

HER. It seems that this man is not going to pay duty to me in death ; but the curses of heaven await you, if you prove disobedient to my commands.

HYL. Alas ! you will soon, methinks, perceive how you are affected by disease.

HER. For you again rouse me from the evils which slumbered.

HYL. Wretched man that I am ! how I am, in many points, at a loss !

HER. For you disdain to obey a father.

HYL. But shall I teach myself, O father, to act an impious part?

HER. There is no impiety, if you give pleasure to my heart.

HYL. Do you command me then justly to perform these things.

HER. I do: I call the Gods to witness.

HYL. I will therefore obey, and no longer refuse, having made it manifest to the Gods that this is your deed. For I shall never appear base, O father, acting, at least, in obedience to your commands.

HER. You conclude well; and, in addition to this, make, O my son, your favour speedy, so that, before any torture or pang assail me, you may place me on the pyre. Come, exert yourselves, raise me up: my respite from evils is the final close of my life.

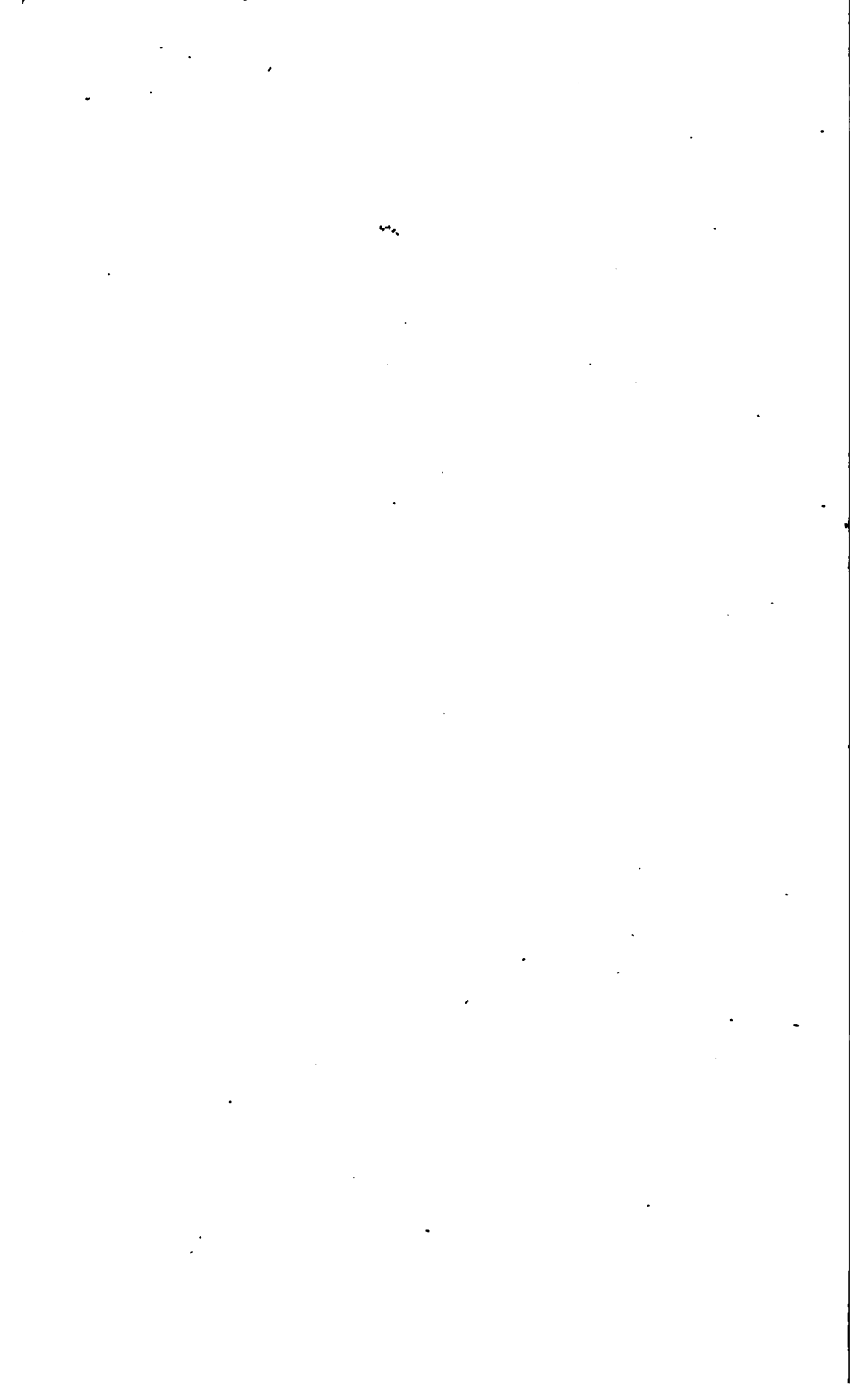
HYL. But there is no obstacle to you in the accomplishment of this, since, father, you command and compel me.

HER. Come now, my stern spirit, before this disease be awakened, fasten on, with adamant, the bit of steel, and restrain lamentation, since this deed, though altogether involuntary, is accompanied with joy.

HYL. Raise him up, ye attendants, forgiving me for these deeds, and being sensible of the great injustice of the Gods, who, though they gave him being, and are called his fathers, can endure to look on these sufferings. The future, indeed, no one foresees; but the events now present are lamentable to us, and disgraceful to them, and most severe to him, of all men, who endures their visitation.

CHO. Do ye neither, O virgins, remain at home,
having seen these recent deaths of the mighty, and
these many sufferings of unwonted affliction; and
nought is there of these which the hand of Jove hath
not wrought.









Rebid Stillid.

6/2001



